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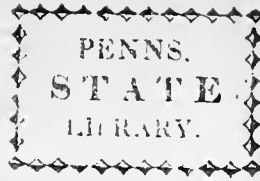
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THE

INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE,

AND THE

LECTURES

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF INSTRUCTION,

AT

WORCESTER, (MASS.) AUGUST, 1837.

INCLUDING

THE JOURNAL OF PROCEEDINGS,

AND

A LIST OF THE OFFICERS.

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PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE BOARD OF CENSORS.

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BOSTON:

JAMES MUNROE & COMPANY.

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1838.

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PRESS OF I. R. BUTTS.....SCHOOL STREET.

## CONTENTS.

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JOURNAL OF PROCEEDINGS. . . . .	Page xiii
LIST OF OFFICERS. . . . .	xiv
ANNUAL REPORT. . . . .	xxi

### INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE, By REV. ELIPHA WHITE. . . . . 1

State of society, 3—*Education*—hitherto conducted upon false principles, 4—shaped by circumstances, 5—confined almost exclusively to physical, intellectual or moral energies, 7—based on invariable character, 9—animal functions developed and strengthened,—rational faculties classified and improved, 10—spiritual affections purified and elevated, 11—in harmonious proportion and perfect symmetry, 12—according to nature, revelation and providence, 13—usefulness and happiness in solitude, the family, social circle, civil society, and under moral government, 16—during infancy, manhood and eternity,—gives form to chaos and brings order out of confusion—destroying every royal road to knowledge, and imaginary source of happiness, 17—hushing the warring elements of fanaticism and insubordination—making men loyal and obedient, 20—noble object and result, 21.

## LECTURE I.

### ON THE STUDY OF THE CLASSICS. By JOHN MULLIGAN. . . . . 23

Selection of a topic for discussion connected with the Study of the Classics—importance of the inquiry, What are the advantages of Classical Learning? 25—manner in which it is proposed to discuss this question—that Classical Education has hitherto answered well the purpose for which it was introduced, not a *conclusive* argument in favor of its claims at the present day, 26—yet the study of ancient learning shown to have exercised a

most beneficial influence on Modern Literature, 27—preliminary remarks on the design of intellectual education, 28—first direct advantage of Classical Learning; a means of access to the knowledge contained in the writings of the Ancients,—notice of the nature of the treasures which these writings contain, 30—this advantage of immense value at the first revival of learning in Western Europe—but not of equal value in our own times, 32—too much stress should not be laid upon it as an argument in favor of the study of the Classics in the present age, 32—second direct advantage of Classical Learning; it serves as a key to Modern Literature—third advantage; it enables us to trace with greater satisfaction the etymology of a large class of words in our own language, 35—and in the languages of Southern Europe, and hence facilitates the acquisition of these languages, 36—but the most important advantages of Classical Learning are of an indirect nature, arising from its instrumentality in training the mental powers, 36—appeal to experience as to its utility for this purpose, 37—two great objects of intellectual training; to prepare for the investigation of truth, and for the communication of knowledge to others, 38—the latter species of training may advantageously be carried forward in advance of the former; the power of communication receiving its full developement earlier than the reasoning powers, 39—classical instruction considered as a means of promoting the first of these objects, 40—futility of the objection that it trains the pupil only to the examination of words, not of things, or of ideas, 41—comparison of Classical Learning with Geometry as regards this point, 42—Classical instruction considered as a means of training for the purpose of communicating knowledge, 43—inference as to the manner in which the Classics should be taught—the objection that the study of the Classics tends to encourage licentiousness considered, 44—refutation of the objection that the study of the Classics injures the cause of Christianity—and of the objection that it inspires bloody and revengeful feelings, 45—in conclusion, a more extensive cultivation of Classical Learning recommended, but not to the exclusion of other useful studies, 46.

## LECTURE II.

ON MORAL EDUCATION. By JOSHUA BATES. . . . . 49

The Will of God, the rule of moral action, and the foundation of moral obligation; because the source of all these relations which give rise to duty, 51—the duties and rights, connected with the business of education, spring exclusively from the *parental* relation; and should be controlled by its requirements, 51—a definition of Education—division into physical, intellectual and moral, with a glance at the two former, 52—*Moral Education*, the principal theme of this lecture, 56—man, a moral being, possessing moral susceptibilities and powers; and therefore capable of moral education—

*Conscience*, its nature and office, with the means of its developement, 56—two mistakes of parents and teachers, in controlling it too much, or affording it too little aid, 57—*Reason*, necessary to moral agency—its connexion with conscience, in establishing moral rules and directing moral action, 57—must be called into exercise by the moral teacher, and aided by revelation—here again, two extremes in the systems of modern education, 61—*Imagination*, its influence on moral sensibility, 61—passive impressions weakened by repetition, and active principles strengthened by exercise, 62—cultivation and control of the imagination with practical hints and illustrations, 62—connexion between moral and intellectual education, 63—provisions for moral and religious instruction in literary institutions—objections answered, 64—the Bible, in select portions, an excellent reading-book; and in the original languages, a suitable text-book—moral character of teachers, 67—the duty of parents, guardians and teachers, in regard to Moral Education; and the importance of the subject to all, viewed in its bearings on the destinies of the rising generation, and the welfare of our country, 67.

### LECTURE III.

ON THE STUDY OF NATURAL HISTORY. By JOHN LEWIS  
RUSSELL. . . . . 71

Low condition of human education, as it must appear to some superior intelligence, now for the first time, introduced to our world, 73—definition and real design of education—importance of correct education beginning to be more justly appreciated—much yet remains to be done, 74—adaptation of the natural world to the improvement and happiness of our race—examination of the order in which, beginning at the creation of man, natural objects force themselves upon his attention, 75—the true value of knowledge consists in the immense *power* which it confers, and not in the mere collecting of facts and theories—error of past ages in this respect—objects of physical science, 77—two distinct branches, natural philosophy and natural history—comparative neglect of the latter—importance of a closer and more general attention to it, among those who are interested in education, 78—the admiration of natural objects almost instinctive,—the indulgence of this taste favorable to civilization and moral improvement, 79—why then, is the study so much neglected?—it is peculiarly interesting to children, 80—causes of the prevalent mistake respecting its utility—error on the part of parents, 81—anecdote of Audubon—error in schools, 82—botany, &c, how pursued in them, 84—evil consequences of this 85—the teacher should not depend too much upon text-books, but should himself be an adept, 86—and should aim chiefly to inspire a taste—text-books defective, and must necessarily be so—want of American works—foreign text-books ill-adapted to the schools of this country, 87—the study of the natural sciences favorable to Christianity—worthy, therefore, of encouragement from the clergy—allusion to Newton, Priestly, Paley, Cuvier, 88—conclusion, 89.



## LECTURE IV.

ON THE COMPARATIVE MERITS OF PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS. By THEODORE EDSON. . . . .	91
---	----

Public schools—under supervision of General Superintending Committee—Colleges, Academies, &c. may be considered as public schools—what are meant by private schools, 93—distinction between public and private schools assumed—private schools may obtain the best teachers—comparatively few private schools do actually obtain them—general difficulty of securing competent teachers, 94—irrelevant considerations affect the selection—less likely to act on the minds of a superintending committee—the statute allows the district system to be dispensed with—the management of the schools should be in the hands of the General Superintending Committee—supervisory power should not be separated from executive, 95—Superintending Committee generally better qualified to select teachers—seminaries for teachers should be encouraged—teaching is itself a science to be studied and understood—there should be public institutions, to complete our common school system—School Fund better appropriated to a public Teachers' Seminary, 96—public schools likely to secure the better class of teachers—superintendence of general Committee better than that of parents—regulation of exercises, books and studies by such Committee an advantage—state of things in private schools, 97—extravagant pretensions in advertisements for private schools—schools showy and superficial, 98—greater simplicity of the course of studies and instruction in public schools—a teacher, in proportion as he is qualified, inclines to simplicity of method—incompetent teachers inclined to depend on books and disposed to multiply and change them—private school system encourages—the other discourages this propensity of incompetent teachers—public school system favorable to the art of teaching, 99—how ignorance of the art is betrayed in examinations—the limited course of exercises may urge the deficient teacher to inquiry, 100—and the enlightened to greater perfection in the art,—pupils in private schools, select, 101—on what principles selected—common schools have not the advantage of being select—the disadvantages of promiscuous acquaintance may be guarded against—children to act in the world, should learn the world, 102—sciences to be learned from things, as well as from books, and are to be taught by an early introduction to the things—God trains by the discipline of promiscuous associates and providentially indicates a suitable method of educating our children, 103—two things to be early learned—how to do good, and how to not receive harm—these better learned in public schools—seclusion, on the whole, not best for our children, 104—grievous mistakes on the subject of good manners—repulsive demeanor not true gentility—selfishness should not be cultivated, 105—comparative advantage of large and small schools in regard to instruction—public schools likely to be

larger—therefore better—discipline should be exact and vigorous—better sustained with a large number—exercises should be lively—to which numbers give briskness and urge the minds of pupils, 106—concluding remark, 107.

## LECTURE V.

ON ELOCUTION. By DAVID FOSDICK, JR. . . . . 109

Introduction—powers of communication possessed by different orders of beings in our world—correspondence between these and capacities of sentiment—brutes—mankind—remarks on human expression, 111—chief channels of communication which are employed by man—science of Elocution embraces two of the channels mentioned, viz. *voice* and *gesture*—employment of the term *elocution* among the ancients—plan of this lecture stated, 112—I. *History* of Elocution—Greece—incidental remarks concerning Egypt, Greece; Athens in particular—nicety of Athenian perception as to delivery—Demosthenes, 113—Rome—Rhodes—modern times; elocution comparatively neglected in them, 115—oral address not so exclusively the means of influence now as in ancient days—improvement and general facility in the art of writing—discovery of printing, 116—II. *Degree of importance* to be accorded to the science—opinion of Demosthenes; of Quintilian; of Cicero; of Rollin; of Lord Chesterfield; of Aristotle and others—consideration of an objection to Elocution, 117—remark on Aristotle's opinion; on that of Demosthenes; on that of Lord Chesterfield, 118—we must take men as they are—reflections showing the great importance of Elocution, 119—III. *True aim* of the science—Talleyrand—statement in opposition—grace subsidiary—transparency, main point—effect of good delivery—necessary to have an honest heart—remark of Quintilian, 120—general remarks on *perspicuity* and *grace* in delivery, 121—IV. *Best means of attaining* good delivery—importance of distinguishing the respective provinces of nature and art—emotion the main source of eloquence in matter or manner, 121—articulate sounds conventional—tones of emotion not so—Rush's *Philosophy of the Human Voice*, 122—theory inaccurate; but if accurate, would be useless—gestures of emotion likewise not conventional—Austin's *Chironomia*, 123—tones and gestures indicative of emotion should be involuntary—oratory not founded merely on principles of taste—other works besides those mentioned—art should have as little direct conscious influence on delivery as possible, 124—the true sphere of art is *previous training*, the formation of *good habits*, 125—remarks on habit generally, 126—habit all in all in those parts of delivery not dependent on present conception and emotion—no effort of art here can be too great—particular consideration of qualities of voice and gesture, 127—*articulation*—*pronunciation*—*compass* of voice; of two kinds, 128—*distinctness* of voice—

difference in natural qualities of voice, 129—health, its influence on the voice—*gesture*—varied exercise of the frame, 130—*reading*—two modes—each should have its proper place, 131—position of Dr. Whately denied—*declamation*, 133—opinion of Dr. Whately disapproved—two species of declamation—faults of present system of instruction in it, 134—practical end not answered—*conversation*—a means of improving delivery—eloquence only earnest talk, 135—easy to acquire habits of elocution in conversation—same manner in oratory—Elocution demands great pains, 136—effect of delivery formed on the principles recommended—importance of the science to the people of the United States—from the nature of their government—prospects of the science, 137.

## LECTURE VI.

ON THE RELATION SUBSISTING BETWEEN THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND THE FACULTY OF A UNIVERSITY, &c. By JASPER ADAMS, . . . . . 130

Number of Universities and Colleges in the United States at the close of the Revolution—their present number—schools of Law, Medicine and Theology—Academies—great importance of all these institutions, 141—statement of the manner in which they are usually constituted—powers of the boards of Trustees and Overseers—of the Faculty, 142—division of the subject—I. *Legal* character of the relation subsisting between the Trustees and Faculty—authorities; Chancellor Kent, Chief Justice Parker, Lord Mansfield, &c., 144—law pertaining to this relation scanty and indefinite, 146—II. Arguments from *analogy*, and the *reason* of the thing—that the Faculty are appointed by the Trustees, does not of itself render the former subordinate to the latter, 146—to make them so, is to reverse the rational order of things, by rendering the *end* subordinate to the *means*—it is always the *Faculty*, that public opinion is accustomed to hold responsible for the success or failure of these institutions—it is a plain principle that the party which is responsible for the issue of an enterprise, ought to be permitted to appoint its own agents, 147—this principle is reversed, when the board of Trustees undertakes to advise, and insists upon directing the Faculty in regard to the *instruction and discipline* of a college—the party employed is not always presumed to be *directed* by the employer—it may sometimes be so in the case of employing *manual labor*—but where peculiar *skill and experience* are required, the *employed* is presumed to *advise and direct the employer*, 148—e. g. the lawyer—physician—clergyman—few situations require more skill, knowledge, and experience than the administration of a college—absurd consequences which are found to flow from the doctrine that the Trustees may direct the Faculty in respect to instruction and discipline—Trustees not often selected on account of any peculiar fitness,



149—III. Examination of the subject by the light of *experience*—1. No College has flourished in which the Trustees have been unwilling to concede to the Faculty the rank and influence essentially belonging to it, 150—2. Those colleges have been most flourishing in which the instruction and discipline have been most exclusively committed to the Faculty, 151—3. Whenever Trustees have interfered in instruction and discipline, they have signally failed, 152—4. *Direct interference*, made with a view even to *sustain* a faculty, is injurious to discipline, 154—summary ; respective duties of Trustees and Faculty—1. To the Trustees belongs the *original organization* of the college, 155—2. To the Trustees belongs the right of *managing the funds*—3. It is the duty of the Trustees to sustain the Faculty by their *countenance* and *encouragement*, 156—4. It is the duty of the Trustees to be governed by the advice of the Faculty, in many cases requiring peculiar *skill, knowledge* and *experience*, as, e. g. the regulation of the *course of study*, and the mode of *instruction and discipline*, 157—conclusion, 158.

## LECTURE VII.

SCHOOL REFORM, OR TEACHERS' SEMINARIES. By CHARLES BROOKS. . . . . 159

Introductory proposition, viz. the wants of our country and of the age require that Teachers' Seminaries should be established and endowed by every State in the Union, 161—inquiry, What has God provided for the best nourishment of the young mind ? and how should these means of development be applied ?—our elementary schools do not apply all the provided means ; and they never will unless they be furnished with purposely prepared teachers—hence the need of Teachers' Seminaries—the community ignorant of the true state of the case, 162—whole subject may be embraced in these questions ; I. What should an instructor of a town-school be required to teach ?—II. What traits of character are necessary in a competent instructor ?—III. Do our instructors teach all that should be taught ; and are they in qualifications all they should be ?—IV. Are Teachers' Seminaries desirable ?—A town-school master should teach, 1. Religion, 164—2. Reading—3. Spelling—4. Writing—5. Music—6. Mathematics, 164—7. Geography and History—8. Natural History—9. Natural philosophy—10. Technology, 165—11. Politics—12. Political Economy—13. Foreign modern languages—14. Logical exercises, 166—15. Metaphysics—16. Composition and Declamation—all these topics of study are taught more or less in the best town-schools of Europe—importance of Religion as the true basis of human culture—so recognised by Plato—the Persians in the time of Cyrus—Locke, Milton, Lord Kames, Cousin—portrait of a good school-

master, 169—1. He should thoroughly understand the branches of study before enumerated—2. He should be able to communicate ideas with perspicuity and promptitude—3. He should be able to show the practical application of what he teaches—4. He should be able to govern his school.—5. He should be a gentleman, 171—6. He should be a good man—7. He should have enthusiasm, 172—books cannot make up for the teacher's deficiencies—the accomplished teacher is a living book—present system of popular education radically defective—testimony of Hon. John Duer—of the American Quarterly Review—of Committee of this Institute in their memorial to the Legislature, 173—almost nothing has been yet done towards elevating the science of teaching to its true rank, that of a *profession*—our republic a quarter of a century behind some of the monarchies of Europe in its patronage of primary education—nothing short of Teachers' Seminaries will remedy the evil, 174—this opinion is gaining ground—New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, &c.—Massachusetts Board of Education—testimony of Cousin to the success of Teachers' Seminaries, where they have been tried, 175—moral influence upon the community—city of Hamburg, 177—conclusion, 178.

## LECTURE VIII.

### ON THE TEACHING OF COMPOSITION IN SCHOOLS. By R. G. PARKER. . . . . 181

Reluctance of young pupils in attempting composition,—reason of this reluctance 183—manner of overcoming the same, 184—difficulties which beset the pupil in his first attempts—object of this lecture to remove these difficulties—first step, and its connexion with the law of suggestion or association, 185—incorporation of words, phrases, &c. in sentences—synonymes, 186—lessons on objects, and lessons on words—analysis, 187—definitions—description, and list of particulars to be embraced in descriptions of sensible objects, 189—description of natural scenery, 190—description of persons, 192—sentences with blanks to be filled,—extract from Jardine's "Outlines of a Philosophical Education," 193—authority of Locke and Bacon 194—proper business of education, and the influence of composition on intellectual improvement, 195—narration with and without an outline—narration from detached sentences, 196—narration and description united, 197—frequency of composition necessary to success,—nature and character of the powers of the mind to be studied by the teacher, 198—source from which ideas are to be obtained—directions for the study of a subject, 199—rules of unity, 200—figurative language, 201—simple themes,—“heads” suggested for simple themes—objections to the formal mode of treating simple themes, answered, 203—complex themes—study of general subjects—methodising, 204—rules for methodising both simple and complex themes, 205—expression, 206—conclusion, 207.

## LECTURE IX.

## ON THE EVILS OF THE PRESENT SYSTEM OF PRIMARY INSTRUCTION. BY THOMAS H. PALMER. . . . . 209

Plan and object of the lecture, 211—what the aim of education should be, 212—answer to sordid objections, 213—picture of a district school, 215—all schools too mechanical—what should be the main object of the teacher, 219—*anecdote of Stone, the mathematician*, 220—*inscription for the school-houses of the United States*—self-education—can foreign languages be acquired without a teacher?—cause of the apathy of youth to knowledge, 221—arithmetic, absurd mode of teaching—intellectual and moral evils arising from it—general mistake in the community respecting the object of school education, 222—description of the improved method of elementary instruction, 223—school libraries, advantages of, 226—advice and cautions to district teachers, 228—three modes of acquiring information from books—teaching of the two most important entirely neglected, 229—writing and composition, 230—taste for the beauties of nature, 231—defects of arithmetic—proposed new system, 232—mental arithmetic—moral and intellectual advantages arising from the proper mode of teaching it, 234—*eulogy on Warren Colburn*—unfortunate blunder of teachers respecting his arithmetic, 235—singular instance of candor in debate of a minister of the gospel, 236—address to teachers of primary schools, 237—conclusion, 238.

## LECTURE X.

## ON READING AND DECLAMATION. BY WILLIAM RUSSELL. 241

Explanatory observations, 243—*Dr. Rush's Philosophy of the Voice*, 244—utility of that work, its design, 245—*Dr. Rush's theory of inflections*, 246—advantages of this theory in its application to instruction,—reply to objections against *Dr. Rush's system*, 247—merits of *Dr. Rush's theory*,—character of *Austin's Chironomia*, 250—reply to objections against it, 251—*elocution an art*, 252—sources of the pleasure derived from oratory,—cultivation of personal tone, 254—of force and pitch, 255—time, enunciation, pronunciation, inflections, 256—emphasis, 257—pause, intonation,—defects of early culture, 258—declamation, its use as a school exercise, 259—*Archbishop Whately's objections*,—importance of early culture, 260—office of the teacher, 261.



## JOURNAL OF PROCEEDINGS.

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### EIGHTH ANNUAL SESSION.

*Worcester, Brinley Hall, Aug. 24, 1837.*

The Institute was called to order at half past 9 o'clock, by the Hon. WILLIAM B. CALHOUN, President, and extracts from last year's Records were read by the Secretary.

The following Committees were then appointed, viz.

*To introduce Ladies and Strangers.*

Messrs. Carter, Thayer and Alcott, of Boston.

*To nominate Officers.*

Messrs. Thayer, of Boston, Kimball, of Needham, Carter, of Lancaster, Pettes, of Boston, Brooks, of Hingham, Greenleaf, of Bradford, and Washburn, of Worcester.

*Voted*, That the hours of business during the session, be half past eight in the morning, the half hour preceding the first lecture in the afternoon, and a quarter before eight in the evening.

*Voted*, That fifteen minutes be the limit of any gentleman's remarks at any one time, unless by special permission of the Institute.

The subject of employing a Reporter was discussed at some length and indefinitely postponed.

*Voted*, That the President be requested to assign a place in the house to any gentleman, who may be willing to report the discussions, &c.

*Voted*, That, if any report of the debates, &c. be made, it be submitted to the Board of Censors for their disposal.

The Secretary then read the Constitution, agreeably to a vote.

Prayers were then offered by the Rev. Mr. Peabody, of Worcester, after which,

The Introductory Address was delivered by the Rev. ELIPHA WHITE, of John's Island, S. C.

At half past twelve, the Institute adjourned.



*Afternoon.*

The Institute having been called to order, it was

*Voted*, That all the time unoccupied by other business be devoted to discussions ; and that the second question on the printed list be the first to be discussed.

At 3 o'clock, the Institute listened to a Lecture from the Rev. J. L. RUSSELL, of Hingham, on "The beneficial, moral, as well as intellectual tendencies of the knowledge and study of Natural History."

The Institute then took a recess of ten minutes, after which

Mr. THOMAS H. PALMER, of Pittsford, Vt., delivered a Lecture on "Primary Education."

The Chairman of the nominating Committee then read the list of nominations, which was accepted.

*Evening.*

The question proposed, viz. The Utility of School Libraries and Apparatus, was taken up, and discussed by Messrs. Pettes, of Boston, Greenleaf, of Bradford, Palmer, of Pittsford, Dr. Alcott, of Boston, Fuller, of Providence, Mack, of Cambridge, Pierce of Nantucket, and Carter, Alcott and Mann, of Boston.

Mr. Palmer then added a few remarks omitted in his lecture of the afternoon.

*Voted*, That the question discussed be resumed in connection with the 6th on the list.

Adjourned.

*Friday, Aug. 25.*

The Rev. Mr. Pierpont, of Boston, having called the meeting to order, it was

*Voted*, That the Institute proceed to ballot for the Officers nominated.\* The whole list was unanimously chosen, viz.

## PRESIDENT.

WILLIAM B. CALHOUN, Springfield, Mass.

## VICE-PRESIDENTS.

James G. Carter, Lancaster, Mass.

John Pierpont, Boston.

Daniel Kimball, Needham, Mass.

Gideon F. Thayer, Boston.

Elipha White, John's Island, S. C.

Samuel Pettes, Boston.

Ethan A. Andrews, Boston.

Lyman Beecher, Cincinnati, Ohio.

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\* Several additional officers were chosen at a later period of the session. See the following pages.

Andrew S. Yates, Schenectady, N. Y.  
 John Park, Worcester, Mass.  
 Walter R. Johnson, Philadelphia, Pa.  
 Nehemiah Cleveland, Newbury, Mass.  
 Ebenezer Bailey, Boston.  
 Solomon P. Miles, Boston.  
 Jacob Abbott, Roxbury, Mass.  
 Benjamin L. Hale, Geneva, N. Y.  
 Denison Olmstead, New Haven, Conn.  
 Samuel P. Newman, Brunswick, Me.  
 John Kingsbury, Providence, R. I.  
 Gardner B. Perry, Bradford, Mass.

## RECORDING SECRETARY.

Thomas Cushing, Jr. Boston.

## CORRESPONDING SECRETARIES.

George B. Emerson, Boston.  
 Henry R. Cleaveland, Boston.

## TREASURER.

William D. Ticknor, Boston.

## CURATORS.

Henry W. Carter, Boston.  
 Joseph Hale Abbot, Boston.  
 Josiah Fairbank, Boston.

## CENSORS.

Charles K. Dillaway, Boston.  
 Frederick Emerson, Boston.  
 William J. Adams, Boston.

## COUNSELLORS.

Jonathan Blanchard, ———, ———.  
 William H. Brooks, Salem Mass.  
 Benjamin Greenleaf, Bradford, Mass.  
 Alfred Greenleaf, Brooklyn, N. Y.  
 Samuel R. Hall, Andover, Mass.  
 Peter Mackintosh, Jr. Boston.  
 William Russell, Philadelphia, Pa.  
 Dyer H. Sanborn, Salem, Mass.  
 Theodore Dwight, Jr. New York City.  
 Emory Washburn, Worcester, Mass.  
 William Lincoln, Worcester, Mass.  
 Charles Brooks, Hingham, Mass.

The Hon. Horace Mann, of Boston, and the Rev. Charles White, of Oswego, N. Y. were added to the list of Vice-Presidents.

At half past 9 o'clock, PRESIDENT BATES, of Middlebury College, delivered a Lecture on "Moral Education."

A recess of 10 minutes was then taken.

At 11 o'clock, the Institute listened to a Lecture from the Rev. CHARLES BROOKS, of Hingham, on "Teachers' Seminaries."

*Voted*, That the reading of some interesting documents in the hands of the lecturer, be heard at the first convenient season in the afternoon or evening.

Adjourned.

*Afternoon.*

The meeting having been called to order by Mr. Pierpont, a communication was made by Mr. F. Emerson, of the Board of Censors.

Mr. WILLIAM B. FOWLE, of Boston, then gave a Lecture on "The Use and Abuse of Memory in Education."

After a recess of 10 minutes, a Lecture was delivered by the Rev. JOHN PIERPONT, on "The relation of the Teacher to the Community ;" and after an interval of 10 minutes, another was read by PROFESSOR MULLIGAN, of N. Y. on "The Study of the Classics."

Adjourned.

*Evening.*

Mr. Pettes called the meeting to order. The Rev. Mr. Brooks, of Hingham, read some translations from Pamphlets sent him by Victor Cousin, on "The Normal School System of Holland," and also a communication to himself, concerning the Institute.

On motion of Mr. Brooks, it was

*Voted*, That a Committee be chosen to memorialize Congress and each of the State Legislatures, on the importance of establishing Teachers' Seminaries.

On motion of Mr. F. Emerson, of Boston,

*Voted*, That a Committee of five, be appointed by the Board of Directors, to attend to this subject.

The question discussed last evening was taken up in connection with the sixth, viz. "Is the acquisition of useful knowledge, or intellectual discipline, the chief object of school education?" and discussed by Messrs. Washburn, of Worcester, Palmer, of Pittsford, Taylor, of Albany, Dr. Alcott, of Boston, White, of South Carolina, Bates, of Middlebury College, and Going, of N.Y.

On motion of Mr. Thayer, of Boston, it was

*Voted*, That the thanks of the Institute be presented to Mons. Victor Cousin, for the hearty interest he has evinced in it, and



the objects in which it is engaged, and for the aid that he so kindly proffers us. And also, that the distinction of Honorary Membership be extended to him.

Adjourned.

*Saturday, Aug. 26.*

Mr. J. G. Carter, of Lancaster, having called the meeting to order, the subject discussed last evening was taken up and laid on the table.

At 9 o'clock, the Institute listened to a Lecture from Mr. LEWIS DE MARIOTTI, of Cambridge, on "The Institutions for Education in Italy."

After a recess of 10 minutes, the Rev. THEODORE EDSON, of Lowell, gave a lecture on "The Comparative Advantages of Public and Private Schools."

A recess of 10 minutes was then taken.

On motion of Mr. F. Emerson, it was

*Voted*, That the Lectures of 1834 and 1835 be sold to members of the Institute at the price of 50 cents a copy; and also that the Secretary be authorised to dispose of them and receive payment.

On motion of Mr. Greenleaf, of Bradford, it was

*Voted*, That the volumes of the Lectures of the Institute from the beginning, be presented to Victor Cousin, with a certificate of Honorary Membership; and that they be entrusted to Mr. Brooks to be forwarded.

The Institute then listened to a Lecture from Mr. J. ORVILLE TAYLOR, of Albany, on "The Common Schools of Europe and our own country."

Adjourned.

*Afternoon.*

Having been called to order, the Institute listened to a Lecture from the Rev. GARDNER B. PERRY, of Bradford, on this subject; "What influence can the Christian Ministry exert on the Common Schools of our country."

After a recess of 10 minutes, Prof. CHARLES PICOT, of Philadelphia, gave a Lecture on "The Teaching of French."

The Secretary having obtained leave of absence during the remainder of the Session, Dr. W. A. Alcott, of Boston, was appointed Secretary pro. tem.

Adjourned.

*Evening.*

Mr. J. G. Carter in the chair. The Committee appointed to memorialize Congress and the State Legislatures on the subject of Teachers' Seminaries, reported that they had agreed to refer

the whole subject to the Institute for further discussion ; the report was accepted.

On motion of Mr. Brooks, of Hingham, it was

*Voted*, That the resolutions offered by him, yesterday, be reconsidered.

Mr. Brooks moved to amend the resolution by striking out the word "Congress." The resolution with the proposed amendment, was then discussed by Messrs. Burnside, of Worcester, Brooks, of Hingham, F. Emerson, of Boston, Pierpont, of Boston, Taylor, of Albany, and Washburn, of Worcester ; it was then laid on the table.

This question was then taken up ; viz. — " Which is the most valuable as a means of Education, Recitation or Conversation ?" It was discussed by Messrs. Pettes, Taylor, Alcott, Burnside, and Russell of Philadelphia, and laid on the table.

Adjourned.

*Monday, Aug. 28.*

Mr. J. G. Carter called the Institute to order at 9 o'clock. A Committee was appointed to wait on the Hon. Horace Mann, the Secretary of the Board of Commissioners of Education, and ascertain at what hour, and for how long a time, the Worcester County Convention, summoned by him, would wish to occupy the hall. The Committee reported that it was expedient for the Institute, when it adjourned, to adjourn to 4 o'clock, P. M. The report was accepted.

The Institute then listened to a Lecture on "School Elocution," by Mr. DAVID FOSDICK, JR. of Andover.

On motion of Mr. Washburn, of Worcester, it was

*Resolved*, That the American Institute of Instruction congratulate the friends of Education in our country, upon the establishment of the Board of Education in this Commonwealth, whose co-operation in the cause in which this Institute is engaged, is a strong guaranty of its ultimate success and triumph.

Adjourned.

*Afternoon.*

In consequence of the lateness of the hour of adjournment of the Worcester County Convention, the Institute adjourned to half past 7 P. M.

*Evening.*

Mr. J. G. Carter in the chair. Mr. F. Emerson having resigned the office of Censor, the Institute proceeded to fill the vacancy by ballot. Dr. Wm. A. Alcott, of Boston, was chosen.

The subject of a place of meeting for next year was then discussed by Messrs. Pettes, Perry and White of S. C. On

motion of Mr. White, it was resolved that the ninth session of the Institute be held in the city of Lowell.

The Rev. Theodore Edson, of Lowell, was elected a Vice President of the Institute. Adjourned.

*Tuesday, Aug. 29th.*

Mr. Carter having called the meeting to order, Dr. Fitch of Philadelphia made some statements in regard to the proceedings of the American Association for the supply of teachers.

At half past 9 o'clock, the Institute listened to a Lecture from Pres. JASPER ADAMS, of Charleston, S. C., being "An Examination of the relation subsisting between the Trustees and Faculty of a College, University or Academy, as such institutions are constituted in the United States."

After the lecture Dr. Fitch resumed his statements.

A Lecture was then given by Mr. R. G. PARKER of Boston, on "The teaching of Composition in schools."

The Annual Report of the Directors of the Institute was then read by Mr. G. B. Emerson, and accepted. Adjourned.

*Afternoon.*

The Institute came to order at 2 P. M. Mr. J. G. Carter in the chair.

The Institute then listened to a lecture from Mr. WILLIAM RUSSELL, of Philadelphia, on "Reading and Declamation."

Mr. H. W. Carter, of Boston, offered the following vote of thanks :

*Resolved*, That the thanks of the Institute be presented to the Rev. Elipha White for his eloquent Introductory Address; and to the Rev. J. L. Russell, Thomas H. Palmer, Pres. Joshua Bates, Rev. Charles Brooks, William B. Fowle, Rev. Jno. Pierpont, Prof. Mulligan, Rev. G. B. Perry, Rev. Theodore Edson, Charles Picot, David Fosdick, jr., Rev. Jasper Adams, R. G. Parker, L. de Mariotti, J. Orville Taylor, and William Russell, for their Lectures which have given so much interest to the present session of the Institute. The resolution was passed.

Mr. Mackintosh, of Boston, offered the following ;

*Resolved*, That the thanks of the American Institute of Instruction be presented to the citizens of Worcester for the kind reception and generous hospitality extended to the Institute during its present session; and also for the lively interest manifested in the all-important cause of Education.

*Ordered*, That the Secretary transmit a copy of the foregoing Resolution to Emory Washburn, Esq., of the Committee of Arrangements.

The Institute then adjourned sine die.

THOMAS CUSHING, JR., *Recording Secretary.*



## ANNUAL REPORT.

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IN obedience to the requisitions of the Constitution, the Directors would respectfully offer their Annual Report.

The internal relations of the Institute are satisfactorily shown by the reports of the several boards to which the most important of its interests have been given in charge.

The Report of the Curators informs us that the library continues to increase, although not so rapidly as we might desire. The pressure of the times marks itself here as elsewhere. Fewer new publications have been placed on our shelves than in some former years. But the Curators have taken care that missing volumes should be hunted up or replaced, that the periodicals should be bound, and all neatly labelled, to give reasonable security of their continuing the property of the Institute. They have procured, on favorable terms, a commodious and well situated room, for the use of the library and the members, and again invite you to avail yourselves of the advantages and pleasures of a common place of meeting, furnished with many new school-books, and other interesting publications on the subject of education, and with the best of the periodicals, both scientific and literary. The room is a new one, different from that formerly occupied; and the Directors hope it will be found more attractive and not less comfortable, and that they may more frequently have the pleasure of meeting in it members of the Institute, both residents of the city and of other places.

The Censors report that in causing to be printed and published the lectures before the Institute at its last annual session, the



terms on which they were obliged to negotiate though not the most favorable that could be desired, were yet the best they could obtain. In consideration of the sum of \$120, the American Stationer's Company printed 250 copies, 20 of which became the property of the Institute, and the remainder were offered for sale at the price of \$1 each. Of the twenty, eight were distributed among the lecturers, and the remainder await the further order of the Institute.

The Treasurer's Report shows that the expenses of the Institute have considerably exceeded its income for the past year.

This mortifying conclusion should, the Directors think, stimulate the members of the Institute to obtain additional subscribers to the constitution, a cause in which the individual subscriber is certainly at least as much benefited as the treasury, and urge upon delinquent members the necessity of punctual payment of the dues to the Institute.

The generosity of our friends here, by providing for the necessary expenses of this present session, has anticipated our wishes and relieved the treasury of some very considerable burdens.

After this rapid statement of the condition of the society as to its means of carrying its great objects into effect, the Directors are happy in embracing the opportunity of congratulating the Institute upon the evidence of the increased and increasing interest which is felt, and that in the highest quarters, in a prominent end of our institution, the welfare and improvement of the common schools.

During the last winter's session of the Legislature of Massachusetts, the Directors caused a memorial to be drawn up and presented to that body, showing the insufficiency of the means now employed for the education of the teachers of the common schools, and praying that the legislature would do something to provide means for their better instruction. — The memorial was received and printed; but the prayer of the memorial was not directly granted. The governor was however authorized to appoint a board of commissioners, with a permanent secretary, having in charge to collect and diffuse information in regard to

the schools of the commonwealth. We may therefore hope that, in another way, than that we proposed, the end we have been aiming at may be approached. The high character and intelligence of the commissioners appointed, and the most auspicious beginning which we have seen made by their Secretary, cheer us with the prospect that the work will be carried on with the energy and wisdom with which it has been begun. — In the Annual Report of the Directors of the last year, they had occasion to lament that their memorial to the Legislature, praying for the appointment of a superintendent of the common schools, although it had been respectfully received and favorably reported on by a committee of the Legislature, had not led to any immediate action. They have now to congratulate themselves and the Institute that, by the appointment of this Board of Commissioners, and by the selection for the office of Secretary of an individual whom the highest body of the Legislature had honored with the first office within their gift, our prayer has been granted — more fully than we had dared to ask or hope. Let us animate ourselves with the confident belief that all our exertions, made in a right spirit, for the advancement of the cause of right and truth, will be ultimately successful, though in a way we may least expect.

It was after much deliberation and with some misgivings, that the Directors last year determined to hold the present session of the Institute in this place. The hope of thereby enlisting new fellow laborers in our cause, among individuals whom circumstances prevent from going far from home — and of exciting the local interest which we believe it is the tendency of our meetings to produce, led the Directors to make the doubtful experiment. The kindness with which we have been received, the interest taken in our deliberations and lectures, and the generous and cordial cooperation of our members and friends here, vindicate the wisdom of the measure, and amply repay us for any trouble or inconvenience attending the removal.

We may now confidently trust that the measure yesterday proposed to the Institute and confirmed, of holding the session of the

next year at the city of Lowell, will be attended with circumstances equally gratifying and favorable.

All which is respectfully submitted.

By order of the Directors,

GEORGE B. EMERSON, *Corresponding Secretary.*

*Worcester, August 29, 1837.*



# **INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE,**

**BY REV. ELIPHA WHITE.**



## INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE.

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GENTLEMEN OF THE INSTITUTE :

I OFFER no apology for occupying the place you have assigned me. It is the right of the whole to appoint, and the duty of each individual to obey. And in accordance with your appointment, and my obligation, I stand before you alike honored and obedient.

Nor shall I shrink from the responsibility of appearing to instruct ; though I might modestly prefer to be instructed. In a place like this, and at a period like the present, we are bound to have opinions of our own ; nor may they be reasonably withheld, when called for by the occasion. And at no former period of the world has there been an equal demand for individual opinion.

All the elements of society are in commotion. Old combinations are breaking up ; and new associations are being formed. The civil, moral and religious institutions of ages are crumbling before the march of intellect and the zeal of reform. Nothing merely human seems firmly based on principles immutable. Crowned heads are trembling for their sceptres ; and sparkling diadems are falling at the feet of the people. Ecclesiastical hierarchies are loosing their hold on conscience ; and the slumbering energies of the soul are waking. Free institutions are trampled under the feet of licentiousness ; and the distant echo of anarchy's confusion is already heard. Earth's stability is shaken. Society seems reverting to its original elements. Moral revolution—moral chaos seems approaching.

And how is the storm to be weathered? Not by might nor by power. Aid human is vain. As well might man raise his hand and stop "old ocean's" rolling wave. He cannot reach the secret spring of the heaving bosom of society. It lies hid in the chambers of eternity. Human wisdom cannot fathom the mystery profound, and develop the cause of this revolution. Human arms and authority cannot stop its progress. Onward is its course. And onward it will go; till complete in a new heaven and a new earth—the formation of a new state of society.

But, if it cannot be stopped, how may it be guided in its course? Nor is the inquiry vain; or the attempt to guide the storm unworthy. And though it should prove difficult in practice; it is wise to understand the theory—to know how to lead and shape the course of the disturbed elements of a convulsed world. It is by *education*.

Not education as hitherto conducted; shaped by circumstances; and confined almost entirely to either the physical, intellectual or moral energies of men. But education based on their invariable characters; and conducted upon the established principles of nature, revelation and providence; which prepares them for usefulness and happiness in every situation and stage of being.

The science of *education has hitherto been* but imperfectly understood, and generally *conducted upon erroneous principles*. It has never assumed an exact form, like other sciences based on immutable principles; and has never developed in their relative proportions and harmonious whole, the entire energies of man. Some, by undue culture, have been pushed to the utmost; while others have remained almost dormant, in their native weakness. The symmetry of human perfectibility, therefore, has ever appeared. Uniformly partial have been the developments of human greatness. And though, in particular instances, it has excited the wonder and admiration of the world, in none has it equalled the capabilities of men. Alexander, Washington and Bonaparte; Bacon, Locke and Newton; Luther, Calvin and Edwards stand out unrivalled monuments of human greatness; but neither class, much less any individual of them, combines the greatness of the whole. Each is great in his particular department; but limited and partial in the development of his capabilities. And instead of being a perfect whole—a well

educated man ; he exhibits only the consummate skill of a general, the profound wisdom of a philosopher, or the moral worth of a divine. And this because his education was defective — based on false principles.

A position equally true in every other case ; and that shows conclusively the imperfection of the science of education. It has never developed the entire capabilities of men in their harmonious and proportionate symmetry ; and can never be ranked among the exact sciences, while thus uncertain, and uniformly imperfect in its results.

*Education generally, perhaps universally, has been shaped by circumstances.* The historian informs us that the laws of Lycurgus and Solon, were only the public sentiment of the age in which they lived. And that their names have been immortalized for doing what circumstances demanded — embodying public opinion in a code of laws, that have influenced society in later periods. Luther, the master-spirit of the Reformation, was rather governed by circumstances, than his own genius in declaring against the Pope, and Church of Rome. Public opinion in Germany was ripe for revolt, and setting in favor of religious and ecclesiastical freedom. He yielded to the pressure of circumstances, and led the van of Protestants. So education at different periods, and in every part of the world, has been shaped by circumstances. It is made to favor the leading objects of a particular community, a whole nation, or the age. And as these vary, so education varies to meet the occasion. Men, therefore, are educated, regardless of their capabilities, according to circumstances — for particular objects. And where these lead to the development only of a particular power or faculty, the rest are left unimproved ; and consequently, the diversified energies of men are never seen in their mutual strength and full glory.

In Egypt, the earliest kingdom of ancient renown, men seem to have been educated principally in the mechanical arts, to contribute to her monuments of fame. And though they still remain the wonder of the world, the energies of their architects were never fully developed. It was their physical and intellectual powers merely that contributed to these objects of national pride. Greece gloried in her arts, sciences and prowess. She therefore educated her poets, her orators and her warriors. But neither Homer, Demos-



thenes nor Leonidas ever exhibited the concentrated greatness of all their energies. They met the occasion, for which they were educated, and are immortalized. Rome, once the proud mistress of the world, still lives in the fame of her Cicero, her Cæsar, her Virgil and her Livy, who were educated for her honor and glory. But, their concentrated energies were never brought to bear on Rome's happiness. Nor were they educated for this. It was not required — circumstances called not for the development. And it was circumstances that shaped the education of the ancients. Of whatever age, nation or clime, their education was regulated by the occasion.

Nor is that of the moderns less affected by circumstances. Even down to the nineteenth century, and the present period, circumstances give character to education. France, a few years since, was looking forward, with her proud Emperor, to universal dominion; and educated her sons for the field — military renown. Nor have they yet lost the spirit acquired in the National Academy — they are restless and ambitious. But a full development of their energies as individuals and a nation can never be made under such circumstances. England, more cool and sentimental, but not less proud and aspiring, glories in her wealth, influence and learning: and boasting of her Shakspeare, Milton, Locke and Newton, educates her Rothschild, Wellington and Brougham. But, though her wealth be immense, her influence felt through the world, and her learning unrivalled; there is not an individual in the united kingdom whose education develops, in harmonious proportion, all his endowments. Under the pressure of circumstances, the development of his energies is partial. Nor is that of Americans less so. New, bold and enterprising, with resources like their rivers, inexhaustible, and aspiring like their lofty mountains, they are educated for adventure, exertion and hardships. Nor will they cease their efforts for the refinements of society, the severer studies of philosophy, or the calm retirement of the virtuous, till the tide of population rolls over valley and mountain to the shores of the Pacific, and the interminable forests of the land are rendered vocal to the praise of man. And in conformity to these circumstances, their education is partial, and their energies in combined force are never seen.

Nor is the influence of circumstances thus general and na-

tional merely; it enters more deeply into sectional feelings, local interests, and private welfare; and shapes the education of different individuals, communities and portions of the same country. In the different sections of our own country, education varies according to circumstances. That of one is characterized by manual labor, physical enterprise; that of another by mental effort, and close calculation; and that of a third by superficial attainments, and honorable feelings. So in our Seminaries, Universities, Colleges, Academies and Schools: each has its peculiarities according to circumstances. And they are stamped on the education of those, who attend them. The education of individuals also is strongly marked by circumstances. Every man is educated for some particular calling or station — with some specific object in view, that gives character to his attainments, and renders partial his developments. Consequently the glory of his concentrated energies is never witnessed.

How general! how universal the influence of circumstances on education! In all periods, every situation, and each instance, it is shaped by circumstances. They give it form and character: though often imperceptibly, yet truly and effectually.

Again, *education is confined almost entirely to either the physical, intellectual, or moral energies of men.* With far the greater part, it is limited to the physical powers. No effort is made to develop any but their bodily strength, animal passions and instinctive feelings. Accordingly the great mass of mankind are raised but little above inferior animals. They labor hard and boast of their strength; gratify their passions, and glory in their shame; eat, drink, sleep and wake, supposing to-morrow will be like the present. They are scarcely aware of their rational, intellectual powers; much less of their ever-expanding and never-dying spirits. Consequently they feel but imperfectly their responsibility; and are governed principally by the fear of human authority. They have been taught to fear or reverence nothing higher. Their education is confined to animal feeling — physical energies. And they have no conception of any thing beyond. The whole intellectual world, and all hereafter, is narrowed down to the animal feeling of the present time. How erroneous! How badly educated! And what are we to anticipate when only the physical energies of men generally are thus developed?

Why surely, what we are beginning to witness, — physical power trampling on all authority.

The education of others is confined principally to intellect. Not that their physical powers are not necessarily more or less developed; but that their attention is directed almost exclusively to intellectual attainments. From the earliest infancy their minds are taxed; though their bodies are neglected, and their souls forgotten. Nor is it unfrequent that their physical strength gives away under the constant pressure of intellectual studies. And thus they are subjected to all the evils of physical inability — the sufferings of living death, in consequence of an erroneous education. Besides, they are destitute of all those kinder feelings, and sympathetic emotions, which alone result from the cultivation of the moral susceptibilities: and become insensible to the more delicate affections of the soul, and elevating hopes of the truly virtuous. They have nothing on which to rest for enjoyment, but intellectual attainments. And even these are small compared with what they might have been under a different course of education. Yet, with what delight are the first developments of intellect discovered by the natural guardian of the infant mind! And with what anxious solicitude are they watched through advancing youth and manhood by those employed in their education. In either stage the development of intellect only seems worthy of an effort. And when carried to the utmost, what may we expect of one destitute of virtue and without strength of body. Little to benefit himself or others. Like Columbus, Franklin or Laplace, he may employ his intellect in useful discoveries; or like Hume, Voltaire and Paine, to curse the world. In either case, he may lead astray, and should never be trusted implicitly. As the barque on the ocean without compass or chart, that rides out the storm, or sinks to the bottom, he may guide us in safety or ruin us forever.

The education, of others again, is confined mostly to their moral energies. Those of the body are almost forgotten; only as nature forces their development upon the reluctant soul within. And those of intellect are deemed unworthy of a thought; except as necessary in the rudest stages of society. While the moral susceptibilities are cultivated to the utmost. They are brought into action in every situation — employed in private, the social circle and around the public altar.



Nor are those employing them ever satisfied. They become fanatics, religious enthusiasts — have zeal without knowledge, and seem resolved on bringing all to their standard. And they enlist in the work all the sympathies of the soul — its tenderest sensibilities, and more compassionate feelings in their enthusiasm. And without intellect to guide, and physical strength to sustain them, they sink under moral excitement and become deranged: a result that might be anticipated from such an education; and one that is often developed, in some of its milder features among the moral reformers of the day. Nor may you reason with them. Reckless of consequences, and regardless of authority, they are not to be convinced or persuaded. They are right, and *know* they are right; for the plain reason that they know nothing else; and will not be diverted from their course. What degradation! Who would not shrink from such an education? — the development of moral energies merely? It never qualified men for the highest attainment — the utmost dignity of which they are susceptible.

Thus, as hitherto conducted, shaped by circumstances, and confined to a single feature of the human character, whether physical, intellectual or moral, education may never dissipate the gathering storm, hold in dread suspense, or even guide the disturbed elements of a world in commotion. It is not adequate to the work; and may not be trusted in a general revolution — the up-turning of the foundations of society.

But, education, based on the invariable characters of men, and conducted upon the established principles of nature, revelation and providence; which prepares them for usefulness and happiness in every situation, and stage of being, may give form to the scattered fragments of broken institutions and bring order out of confusion. Diversified as are the developments of human character, and dissimilar, as they may appear to the careless observer; there are peculiar characteristics of men, that render them similar to one another, and unlike every other being. In their natures, original susceptibilities and ultimate destinies, they are alike. They are material, intellectual, and spiritual — animal, rational and immortal. In these peculiarities, differing from all others, their characters are invariable. And *on these uniform traits of character, education should be based.* It should develop and strengthen the animal functions; classify and improve the

rational faculties ; and purify and elevate the spiritual affections in harmonious proportion and perfect symmetry.

The animal functions of the human system are to be developed and strengthened by education. Hitherto they have been assigned to the province of nature, and deemed foreign to the objects of education. But a more unphilosophical and dangerous theory has seldom been embraced ; as the melancholy results abundantly testify. To this source may be traced numerous evils common to most. The sallow countenance, trembling nerve, and deformed body are among the number ; while bodily suffering, mental alienation and premature death are not unknown. Nor will these evils cease to be known and felt, till the influence of education extends to its appropriate sphere of the animal functions. They must be brought under a strict regimen, and made to conform to the laws of their nature. Nor may they be weakened and destroyed by indulgence, or strained and overpowered by exertion. Either extreme is ruinous to the animal system, and prostrates the energies of the body in debility, sickness and death : while proper care in childhood, through youth and manhood, to air, diet, dress and exercise, will secure health, activity and long life. The laws of nature are not more uniform than the results of such a course are certain. Nor may the physical energies of men be brought to equal perfection without education. It is this that develops and strengthens in harmonious proportion the animal functions.

The rational faculties also are to be classified and improved by education. Ignorant of the essence of mind, and limited in our acquaintance with its operations ; we are not to follow the schoolmen in their metaphysical speculations and vain theories. No *a priori* reasoning may be applied to the mind, and no deductions drawn from it are safe. They only delude and bewilder, without rendering any thing certain, or improving the mind. Nor are the names of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, philosophers and metaphysicians of ancient fame ; or those of Descartes, Leibnitz and Locke of the modern school, sufficient to sanction their utility, and render safe a practical application. But with Reid, Stewart and Brown, the phenomena of mind may be known, and by induction classified and traced to appropriate mental faculties, that can be improved. And this is the province of education. It should classify these phenomena, and refer them generally to the understand-

ing and will, or affections: and then more minutely to the different faculties of each; as perception, memory, reason, judgment, fancy and imagination; or love, hatred, envy, revenge, fear, hope and joy. Faculties thus developed and classified should be improved; especially those of the understanding. Nor is there aught more susceptible of improvement than the rational faculties of the mind. They may be strengthened and expanded without bounds. The perception may be rendered more acute, the memory more retentive, the reason stronger, the judgment better, fancy brighter, and the imagination more lofty. And this by discipline, constant employment, education. They should, therefore, be educated — every rational faculty should be brought into action, continued action. And guided in their operations, their relative and united strength may be increased without end. Each progressive step, through endless being, may develop new powers of intellect; and the mind rise higher and higher in its contemplations of unfolding events, and existences infinite. And though it may never fully understand the incomprehensible perfection of infinite intelligence, what may it not attain? Who shall set bounds to the ever-expanding rational faculties of man? And though a work of infinite magnitude, who will deny them an education? Indeed they should be educated for their destiny — to look out on immensity, and contemplate scenes eternal.

And further, the spiritual affections should be purified and elevated by education. It is not enough that man has a sound body and a sane mind, he must have pure affections — a virtuous heart. And yet few only embrace the affections in their systems of education. They are willing to leave them untutored — to the guidance of blind chance, or what is no better, nature unsanctified. If they can preserve the health and strength of the body, and develop the intellectual powers of the mind; they seem satisfied that the affections should remain impure and groveling. But what more unwise? while the affections are the moving springs of moral action. What more unphilosophical? while men are possessed of a spiritual nature. Shall we cultivate the inferior parts of their natures, animal and rational; to the entire neglect of the superior, spiritual? Shall our endeavors to improve and elevate be confined to the mortal or even intellectual powers of immortals? How absurd? What folly? Shall we not rather



purify and elevate their moral, spiritual aspirings? And may not the affections be educated? If not in nature changed, may they not be rendered more pure and worthy? May they not be directed to objects high and ennobling, immaterial and eternal? And will not the objects of affection, give character more or less to the affections themselves? Then surely they are brought within the province of education; and may be purified and elevated. Nor is any system of education, that does not embrace the affections, perfect in itself, or worthy of the enlightened age in which we live. It can never do for men what education is designed to accomplish — raise them to the highest dignity of their nature. But the education of the affections is a more delicate task than we are apt to imagine. It requires those of the purest principles, warmest sympathies and holiest motives, to guide successfully the spiritual aspirings of immortal beings. They may not be led upward by those whose affections never ascend to objects ethereal. Yet with holy example and kindred feeling the moral susceptibilities may be excited, and the affections trained for nobler scenes. They may be fixed on the skies; and though earthly objects of affection fail, these shall remain undisturbed. And with affections thus pure and elevated, the evils of life may be met with composure, the terrors of death swallowed up in victory, and the scenes of eternity rendered congenial to the soul immortal.

The animal, rational and spiritual natures of men, however, must be educated in harmonious proportion and perfect symmetry. Nor is their education perfect without it. It is the combination of the whole, rightly proportioned, that constitutes the man. His physical powers, intellectual energies and moral susceptibilities, must all be held in equilibrium, and concentrated in united action, to exhibit his true character, dignity and greatness. And it is to this that education aspires, and should attain. Nor may human perfection ever be anticipated, till the systems of education are so modified and enlarged as to embrace the whole man, and the utmost range of being. And in its progress to this only may we discover the advance of society, the stability of our institutions, and the hope of the world. It is this, and only this, to which we may look for safety on the heaving bosom of society — amidst the convulsive throes of expiring systems — and till moral existence assumes a new formation.

Thus based on the characters of men, *education must be conducted in accordance with the established principles of nature, revelation and providence.* There are great and eternal principles that run through all the works of nature, and regulate the movements of the God of nature. And to violate these principles, and run counter to the laws of nature, may never accomplish the objects of education. However specious the course, and flattering the prospect, the result will be unsuccessful. Nature will never deviate from her course to render any experiment useful. Her course is fixed, and success attends only what accords with it. To learn then her course — the principles of nature, is an attainment worthy of exertion. It opens a source of information of vast importance. And consequently *nature is the first volume* to be employed in education. We must survey the animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms, and discover their mutual relations and dependences. This opens a vast field for patient investigation. Nor may we cover the whole with a single grasp; but examine, with minute inspection, first, perhaps, the animal kingdom; and with the aid of science and philosophy, ascend from the meanest insect, through the various gradations of animated nature, to man the proud sovereign of all. Next, enter the vegetable kingdom with the same aids and facilities, and examine the blade of grass, blushing flower, waving bough and sturdy oak; till the various orders and more numerous species, with the different qualities of each, are familiar. And then explore the mineral kingdom, till acquainted with all the precious jewels, valuable metals and grosser substances. And thus discover the relations of the various objects in either kingdom, and those of one kingdom with another, and their mutual dependence on him, who created and governs the whole. Through nature look up to nature's God, and learn the principles that govern the natural world, and from analogy discover those of the moral. Nor may we fail to discover the more important, that bind us to the throne of God, and render obedience to his authority a debt of gratitude. And knowing our duty to him, we can scarcely fail to feel our obligations to one another. Thus from nature we learn the great leading, eternal principles of our being. And upon these principles — in accordance with our natures, education should be conducted. It is thus only that human capabilities may be developed in all their native strength and moral grandeur.



Nor do these established principles of nature differ from those of revelation. Indeed the revealed will of heaven — the Bible, in all its moral principles, is but a republication — second edition of nature. In addition to these, it contains, truly, an episode on the redemption of men. *Revelation*, therefore, is the more valuable as *the second volume* to be employed in education. It not only confirms and makes plain the principles of nature ; but holds out the olive-branch to the offender. And though a deviation from the principles of nature has rendered the mediation of another necessary ; still the Bible points out a remedy, and proffers the requisite aid to a perfect education : a favor to be obtained from no other source — revelation alone brings life and immortality to light. It is therefore essential to the full development of immortal existence, and should enter into every system of education designed for men. It should be employed in the first budding of immortality, and through every succeeding stage of life. Nor may it be laid aside till mortality is swallowed up in immortality ; and we see as we are seen, and know as we are known. Then indeed revelation will yield to experience, and education be conducted upon the principles of eternity : which will but carry out those of nature and revelation upon which it was commenced. For while the principles of revelation accord with those of nature, they reach forward to those of eternity, and form a connecting link between the two. Education therefore, conducted upon those of the former, will be continued upon the latter forever. Nor are these principles other than the relations and dependences, obligations and duties, responsibilities and rewards of revelation, that develop, expand and immortalize man. And these alone will hold him in check — restrain his passions, and guide his reason amidst intellectual excitement, falling institutions and moral revolution. To meet all with composure, then, and move forward in progressive improvement, he must be educated in accordance with the principles of revelation.

Nor will these be at variance with those of providence. Indeed, *providence* is only a commentary on nature and revelation—a daily periodical illustrating and enforcing of the principles of both : and therefore should be employed as *the third*, and only remaining *volume* necessary to an entire education. It renders what, in nature and revelation is dark and mysterious, plain and obvious. It is the every-day, com-

mon-sense exhibition of principles based in truth, and leaning on the interests of the present and future. And it should therefore be studied with care ; while it forces the truth on the reluctant observer. Nor may any refuse instruction from the lessons of providence. They are too plain and forcible to be neglected and forgotten. They sometimes speak in the still small voice of the even tenor of its course, and then in the startling accents of scenes overwhelming ; while all are held responsible for a part in passing events, and made acquainted with the comments of providence — the course of wisdom — the principles of moral government. And in accordance with these developments only may, their education be complete. They correspond with those of nature and revelation — rather illustrate them in a practical application to the common concerns and busy scenes of life ; and are therefore appropriate, and even necessary to a full exhibition of human greatness. Every successful effort to accomplish which, must accord with these established principles of providence.

Thus, in accordance with the principles of nature, revelation and providence, education, in all its departments, and at every stage, must be conducted to render certain the highest attainment. These only bring out the man — develop his ever-expanding faculties — and urge him forward to honor, glory and immortality.

Conducted upon these principles, *education prepares men for usefulness and happiness in every situation and stage of being.* Various are the situations in which men are placed, and different are the stages of their being. At one period, they are in the infancy and youth of existence ; at another in the manhood of life ; and then in eternity. Sometimes alone ; at others in the family ; then with the social circle ; again in civil society ; and always under moral government. In every situation, and at each period, they are desirous of happiness, and bound to be useful.

Lost as some are, for thought, employment and happiness, when alone ; the educated are never less alone than when by themselves. They have resources within their own bosoms, and find society in the objects around. Nor would they exchange their solitary reflections for society less agreeable. They range through nature, in all its varied forms, unrestrained ; and find enjoyment in the contemplation of scenes past and to come. The whole world and being unending is

spread out before them ; and they are happy alone. Not that they shrink from society, or would selfishly enjoy themselves in retirement ; but that the sources of happiness are within their reach, and made available in solitude.

From this, they cheerfully mingle in the family, and are happy in contributing to the enjoyment of others. Nor is their usefulness to them, less than the happiness of themselves. Upon the principles of their education, they discharge the duties of the station assigned them ; and are useful in the instruction, elevation and mutual good feeling of the domestic circle. Nor is aught more worthy, more noble, more lovely, more exalted and heavenly, than a family thus educated, united and happy.

And easy is the transition from this to the social circle, where the educated are equally happy and useful. Mingling their sympathies, extending their aid, imparting their knowledge, and raising their fellows in influence, intelligence and virtue, they are happy themselves and useful to others. And in this, they are giving character to society, inculcating principles of morality, and elevating the standard of piety. Nor is there employment other more pure and ennobling. It dignifies human nature and immortalizes man.

The advance, from this, to civil society is small ; though attended with interests of great magnitude. It is here, that the educated are useful beyond the sphere of personal influence ; and where they may be more happy in promoting the general welfare. Their movements tell on the community, and the whole country. And where they lead to good order, and loyalty, they are of national utility. They give stability to character, and free institutions ; unite the feelings and interests of the nation ; and command the fear and respect of the world. What vast interests are thus depending on the general movements of the more enlightened, and better educated ? They involve not only the happiness of a single nation ; but a world of nations.

From this to the moral government of God the advance is natural and easy. And here the happiness of the educated and loyal is perfect, and his usefulness is felt through the universe. Though located in some obscure corner of earth, like the encircling waves of the fallen pebble on the stagnant pool, that reach the furthest shore, his influence extends to all the different ranks of moral intelligences. Not one, of all the

rational and intelligent subjects of God's moral kingdom, is insensible to the movements of the truly enlightened and virtuous. Nor is he less happy in the full enjoyment of all his expanding faculties and moral susceptibilities.

And this may be, whether in the infancy of being, manhood of time, or ages of eternity. Happiness and usefulness are confined to no stage of being. During the period of infancy and youth we may be happy and useful under proper culture — rightly educated: and though not so extensively, as in after being, yet not less really. The first dawning of human existence may be attended with blessings in nature perfect: and under the fostering care of wise instruction may continue in their enjoyment.

Nor will they, under the same culture, be denied in manhood — when advancing years and rolling time have urged us forward to the busy scenes of life. Even then, and through time, we may be happy and useful. Neither the cares of life, nor the fearful anxieties of the future may disturb our repose, or render our influence unwelcome. Rightly educated, we meet events as they rise, and the utility of our course is unquestioned.

And when life shall cease, and the ages of eternity commence their rounds, the source of happiness shall remain; and our usefulness be acknowledged through all the ranks of superior intelligences. And in their acknowledgements and our enjoyment will appear the true dignity of man and glory of his instruction.

*Education such*, that develops the whole man, physical, intellectual and moral, in accordance with the laws of nature, the will of heaven, and providential dealings, qualifying him for personal enjoyment and mutual benefit in solitude, around the fire-side, among friends, as a citizen and a christian, in early life, through time and forever, *may give form to chaos and bring order out of confusion*: First, by destroying every royal road to knowledge, and drying up every imaginary fountain of happiness. Numerous are the inventions of men to find a short way to knowledge. They have used translations and abridgments; read reviews and journals; employed hieroglyphics and mathematical blocks; grammatical wheels and geographical cards to obtain knowledge — an education without thinking — without exertion. But all will not do. To be wise and learned, they must think and act, study and



investigate. Nor is there any other way of attaining the object. They must go deep and philosophically into the works of nature ; examine patiently and thoroughly the claims of revelation ; and closely and continually observe the leadings of providence, to become acquainted with themselves, the secret springs of human action, and the immutable principles of God's government. Thus education in its appropriate sphere and proper meaning, forever destroys every royal road to learning. There is none. And there never can be any. To know truly and act correctly, men must think intensely and perseveringly.

Various also are the imaginary sources of happiness. All men would be happy ; and most expect to obtain the blessing. Yet many are disappointed in their expectations. They utterly fail of the anticipated good ; and because they seek it where it may never be found. They would find it in the violation of their natures — trampling on the authority of revelation — or in open defiance of the course of providence. But, in either case, they are unprepared to meet rising events, or to join in future scenes. This is the result of an education they do not possess ; an education, that qualifies them for happiness in every place and at all times, corresponding with nature, revelation and providence. Nor is there any other from which it may flow. Every imaginary fountain of happiness then is dried up. And all, who would be happy from any source other than the well of knowledge and fountain of life, must be forever disappointed.

Thus, by removing the ground of all false hopes of happiness, and closing every specious avenue to knowledge, education does much to base them on a permanent foundation. And this serves as a corner-stone, immovable, on which to found every social, civil and religious institution. As a mighty rock in the ocean around which the waves dash and break in vain, so this stands firm amidst experiments and change. Neither one nor the other can move the foundations of knowledge and happiness. Amidst chaos else, this is fixed — wisdom and happiness are based on right education. And could this be stamped on every page of earth, and made to stand out in bold relief, how would brazen ignorance stand abashed, and presumptuous folly hide itself ! Nor would little be done to restore the convulsed elements of society to order.

Again, secondly, education would restore order by hushing



the warring elements of wild fanaticism, and lawless, reckless insubordination. The restraints of law and authority, and of morality and religion, seem to have yielded to restless impatience and enthusiastic zeal. Respect for age, fear of justice, and regard for truth, are giving away to youthful ambition and heedless enterprise. Retiring modesty and female delicacy and loveliness, are throwing off the veil, and assuming rights, and exercising an influence that ill become them. The very floodgates of licentiousness are giving way before the impetuosity of aspiring tyrants and ignorant zealots. They seem ready to break down the laws of society and of nature, and in defiance of the positive commands of heaven to bring all on a level. Nor is there hope left, but in education, based on the invariable characters of men, and conformed to the fixed laws of nature, revelation and providence; that qualifies them to stem the torrent of licentiousness with peaceful composure, and brave the dangers of hereafter in triumph.

This alone may hold in check the panting spirit of wild fanaticism; a spirit warring against good order — the peace of individuals, families, communities, nations and the world: and one that nothing but intelligence and virtue may ever tame or even restrain. Heedless and ignorant, it knows no fear, and will take no advice, while it urges forward its course. To check it, then, light must be thrown into its path. And what more successful in this, than education? It throws light all around; and makes the darkness of fanaticism visible. No sooner is the mask torn away than it hides itself in retirement. Fanaticism shrinks from the light of education. And thus it may be held in check.

So with lawless, reckless insubordination — it may be held in suspense by education. Though it sometimes shows itself in opposition to parental authority; then in rebellion against school, academy, and college regulations; next in city mobs and political parties; and finally in contempt of the moral government of heaven: still there is a redeeming principle in education. A principle, that may hold insubordination itself in suspense. It holds up the strong arm of civil authority, and the overwhelming retributions of eternity. And though they should not stop its course entirely — it will be held in dread suspense. Lawless and reckless as it is, it dares not brave sworn vengeance and Almighty strength.

Thus, by suspending the operations of insubordination, and

checking the warring spirit of fanaticism, education tends to order. It holds fast the struggling elements of discord, and gives form and character to society. Nor may the ambitious and enthusiastic grasp all power, and hurl the moral world into chaos unprepared. Though revolution proceed to ultimate consummation, its progress is gradual, and may be guided by education. And thus order partial is sustained amidst ruin else.

Finally, education may restore order complete, by making men loyal and obedient to civil authority and bringing them under moral government. As social beings, men have formed themselves into civil society, and adopted rules and regulations to govern their intercourse with one another: and as rational and accountable beings, they are ever under the moral government of God. These different forms of government are necessary to their well-being. The one to regulate their civil conduct; and the other their moral action. Nor may they deviate from either with impunity. Yet many trample on civil authority and disregard the threatenings of the Almighty. They will not acknowledge the claims of any government, and refuse to be regulated in their course by God or man. And in open defiance of both, they violate the laws of the land, and the laws of heaven. Their responsibilities, however, are commensurate with their obligations. Consequently they subject themselves to deserved punishment for every offence.

Loyal and obedient, however, under the forming hand of education, they would neither offend nor be punished. And educated in accordance with the laws of nature, revelation and providence, they would be loyal and obedient to civil authority. They would be subject to the powers that be, and never deviate from good and wholesome laws. Though human, they would be revered and obeyed. And thus the laws of the land would become their guide, and the protection of the weak; — a terror to evil doers, and the pride and boast of the whole; frowning the lawless delinquent from civil society, and holding out the olive-branch to the civilized world. Order thus would be restored, and peace reign through the abodes of men.

The same loyalty and obedience under moral government, would make men willing subjects of heaven. And rightly educated they would be loyal and obedient. In accordance

with the principles of their natures, as revealed in the Bible, and developed in providence, their moral actions would accord with the government of God. And thus acknowledging their allegiance to heaven, and submitting to the requisitions of their sovereign, they restore order through all the ranks of his moral kingdom. Nor would aught disturb its repose, were all loyal and obedient.

Thus by making men patriots and christians, loyal and obedient subjects of civil authority and moral government, education effects an entire change, and restores order complete. Amidst confusion, chaos and ruin, it may guide the storm, and bring the scattered fragments of broken institutions into one harmonious and universal government: a government based on virtuous intelligence and loyal obedience: one that the storms of revolution cannot shake, and the crumbling elements of earth shall not undermine.

Such are the conservative powers, the redeeming energies of education. It controls the man, guides the storm of revolution, and brings order out of confusion. It is the secret of self control — the basis of free institutions. It makes us free; while it calms the passions, and hushes the noise of strife. It

“Fixes on the skies, and bids earth  
Roll; nor feels her idle whirl.”

Noble object! high aim! worthy of the Institute — and of man. Persevere — educate the world, and it is redeemed. Redeemed from ignorance and delusion; fanaticism and insubordination; civil discord and moral revolution. And though brass and marble immortalize not your name; when these are mouldered in the dust, or have mingled in the last fire, you shall live in immortal honor.



LECTURE I.

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ON THE

STUDY OF THE CLASSICS.

By JOHN MULLIGAN.





## ON THE STUDY OF THE CLASSICS.

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IN searching for a suitable topic connected with *the Study of the Classics*, on which to address you on this occasion, two subjects of inquiry seemed to present the strongest claims to our consideration, viz. *What are the advantages of Classical Learning*; that is, as we understand these terms, of the study of the languages and literature of ancient Greece and Rome? And, *What is the best manner of studying the Classics*? Whilst both inquiries deserve the deepest attention of those who feel interested in the cause of education, the first has a natural claim to precedence, as it is but reasonable that we should ascertain that classical education really presents advantages worthy of our pursuit, before we give ourselves the trouble of inquiring what are the best means of succeeding in this pursuit. A careful discrimination of these advantages may also throw light on the second inquiry — may serve to settle important principles for our guidance in the art of instruction.

Another consideration has had much influence in fixing our choice on the first of the two above mentioned inquiries as the subject of the present lecture; the discussion can be more easily compressed into a discourse of moderate length. The second inquiry would carry us into a vast field, of which we could occupy but a single corner.

We are fully aware that the subject which we have selected may *now* appear trite. But it is, we think, far from being yet exhausted — far from being as clearly understood, and as extensively understood as the interests of education, demand. That, in saying this we do not attach too much importance to the inquiry, *What are the advantages to be de-*

rived from the study of the languages and literature of ancient Greece and Rome? will appear obvious enough to those who only consider the large space which these languages and literature have hitherto occupied in the course of instruction adopted in the schools of learning in Europe and in this country. This subject possesses also an incidental interest at the present time, from the fact that the wisdom of our forefathers in giving these languages such a *conspicuous* place in a liberal course of education, and the wisdom of those who have the present direction of literary institutions in permitting them to retain this place have, of late years, been frequently called in question. Even the propriety of devoting any share whatever of attention to them has been violently disputed. It will also be readily perceived that this is a question on which it becomes all who are intrusted with the guardianship of youth, and the direction of education, to endeavor to obtain clear and settled views, as its decision may essentially modify their plans, and may at the same time relieve them from that uncertainty and that vacillation which are equally perplexing and prejudicial in all the important concerns of life. It cannot therefore be thought inappropriate to this occasion to present our views of this matter, and to assign our reasons for thinking that the study of the Ancient Languages is, even in the present advanced state of learning, entitled to a *conspicuous* place in a liberal course of education.

In pursuing this subject, we do not intend to act the part of the mere interested advocate, by exhibiting only that side of the question to which we happen to feel favorable, and drawing in every species of *plausible* arguments to our assistance; we aim at the performance of a more dignified task, — the task of the candid inquirer after truth. We have not the presumption to expect that we can bring forward much that is absolutely new on a subject so often treated. But, whilst we do not expect to add materially to the stock of ideas possessed by our respected auditors, we hope to fix their attention on what we cannot but think, for the reasons stated, a very interesting inquiry; and to direct their thoughts, for a few minutes, to some of the points of view in which it may be advantageously considered, leaving the ultimate decision, in a great measure to their own mature reflections.

Pursuing this plan, we will not insist on the argument drawn from the fact that the system of education, which embraces a respectable course of classical instruction has been

tested by long experience, and has been found to answer well the purposes for which it was introduced. This is the argument commonly used in defending every system which is incrustated with the venerable rust of antiquity. It may be employed in opposing rash innovations and dangerous experiments; and it may be abused to the support of errors consecrated by age, and to the rejection of the most useful improvements. Such arguments, though they have much weight with a certain class of minds, are justly regarded by the more intelligent with suspicion, as they may be employed with equal effect in the cause of error and the cause of truth.

Yet we are not ignorant that this argument which we surrender, might be wielded with peculiarly powerful effect by a dexterous advocate in the cause of the Ancient Classics. The prodigious advance made in every department of mental culture, immediately upon the revival of the study of Grecian Literature, might be adduced as a proof of the beneficial influence of this system of education now sanctioned by the wisdom of ages. The names of the vast number of illustrious men whose genius has been invigorated by draughts from the fountains of Antiquity, might be recounted with great effect. It might be asserted, that to our having drunk of these fountains, we are indebted in a great measure for that direction of the rational powers, which distinguishes the inhabitants of western Europe and their descendants from the portion of the Eastern nations, which has given some attention to mental pursuits, but, as we generally suppose, to comparatively little purpose; and that to these ancient models we are indebted for that peculiar direction of the human intellect, which has had a great share in leading to all the improvements of modern times, in legislation as well as in literature. All this might be asserted, and asserted as we think, with truth.

Greece, of all the nations of antiquity of which we possess any satisfactory knowledge, has happily adopted that taste in her literary works, and in conducting her philosophical inquiries, as well as in the conception of her works of art, which never fails to obtain the approbation of the cultivated understanding, and to which even the uncultivated mind is rarely insensible. Whether this pre-eminence has arisen from the larger advances which she has made in civilization — in mental culture — from something peculiar in the genius of her people, in her atmosphere, or her soil, or, as we rather think, from a certain, fortunate direction of her early efforts under

the impulse of motives which we cannot now hope to trace successfully, may be questioned. But amongst competent judges we think there can be no question as to the fact that the models, which Greece affords us in every department of literature, are as much superior to those of all other ancient nations, (here we except the records of our holy religion, thinking it manifestly improper in any way to draw them into such a competition,) as are the beautiful proportions of some of her exquisite works of art, to the rude and hideous objects of Egyptian and Hindoo adoration. We are, therefore, fully persuaded that the introduction of Greek and Roman models, at the dawn of letters in Western Europe, has had a *very great* and a *very beneficial influence* on modern literature; and that, not only as regards method and elegance in the execution of works of genius, but also in inspiring boldness and vigor in our philosophical investigations. Yet the argument drawn from this view of the subject, though so suitable to the purpose of declamation, we wholly surrender. By pursuing such a train of reasoning we might find abundant entertainment, but we should make very slow advances towards a correct and strictly logical decision on the real merits of the question before us. For all that we have just now said may be admitted — may be strictly true — and still it may be questionable whether Greek and Roman Literature merit, at the *present day*, that conspicuous place which they hold in a liberal course of education.

Here it may not be improper to remark that there are two purposes — altogether distinct — which intellectual education proposes to effect, and which it may be of advantage in the prosecution of this inquiry not to confound. One of these is to *develope* and *invigorate* and *train* the *mental faculties*. The other is to store the mind with knowledge which may be of use in future life. The first of these purposes we consider the most important, especially in the case of the more youthful pupil. Yet many, we suspect, judge of the advantages, or disadvantages of a course of education without taking this object of paramount importance into their calculations. Hence they consider no branch of learning useful, except the knowledge which it embraces may be turned *directly* to some advantageous purpose. Were the design of education solely to store the mind with knowledge, which may be of direct use to a man in his future profession or avocation in life, the choice of subjects for a course of public instruction, instead of



being — as the wisest confess it to be — extremely difficult, would be the easiest thing in the world. It would be as easy on this ultra utilitarian system to point out a course of study to the young professional pupil, as it is for the carpenter to direct his apprentice in the acquirement of the knowledge and dexterity necessary to his craft. But then we should have no place for what is called a *liberal* as distinguished from a *professional education*; and every man, if this system be adopted in its *full* extent, must forever remain ignorant of every thing except what has a direct bearing on his own peculiar pursuits. No man of sense, we think, can at this day seriously defend such a course of education — a course of education which would assimilate our condition to that of the Hindoo castes, or of the mechanic, who knows only how to form the point of a pin, but understands not the mystery of forming and adjusting the head. In direct opposition to all these narrow views, we maintain that it is the great purpose of *early* education, — and particularly of a *liberal* education, as distinguished from a professional education, or from learning a useful mechanical trade, — not so much to store the mind with large funds of knowledge, as to prepare it for the successful pursuit of useful knowledge, to fit it for the investigation of any subject on which it may be necessary hereafter to employ its powers, to train it to a methodical arrangement of the treasures which it may acquire, and to assist in rendering it capable of making these treasures available to others by communicating them in a perspicuous and agreeable manner.

So far as the best system of early training, and the acquisition at the same time of highly useful knowledge can be combined, it will obviously be advantageous to do so. The system of education which most completely combines both we would pronounce the best. But if subjects at the same time the most directly useful, and the best adapted to develop the youthful powers cannot be found, we should give our decided preference to that subject, though intrinsically less useful, which affords the best scope for exercising the mind.

These principles being submitted as necessary to be kept in view in forming a correct decision in respect of any course of education, we proceed to inquire whether the study of the Greek and Latin languages and literature has not high claims, both on the head of intrinsic usefulness, and as affording an excellent course of training and discipline to the youthful mind.

Let us first attend to the direct advantages which arise from the study of the learned languages.

The most prominent and obvious advantage of the study of these languages is, that it affords us direct access to the treasures of knowledge which they contain. The ancient languages being no longer useful as a vehicle for the interchange of thought with men of foreign climes, it might appear to a superficial observer that this which we have mentioned is the only benefit to be gained by learning them. And in regard to some ancient languages, we might perhaps admit that it is. The study of some of the Oriental dialects is, perhaps chiefly, if not exclusively, useful, because in them are contained the oracles of God in the original diction of the sacred penmen ; and of others, because they throw light on these originals from affinity of dialect, or because they contain versions executed when the language of the scriptures was still a living tongue, and the manners of the inhabitants of ancient Palestine, their opinions, customs—every thing that would assist in the faithful translation of their records—were better known than at the present time. It may be observed, in passing, that all these advantages, to recommend it to the student of theology, are possessed in an eminent degree by the Greek language, in common with some of the Eastern dialects, as being the original language of the whole—as many critics maintain—or, as all admit, of the greater part of the New Testament, and as containing the most ancient, and, in some respects, perhaps, the most valuable version extant of the scriptures of the old Testament.

Yet on the advantage which the ancient languages afford us, in giving us access to the treasures of antiquity, we do not intend to lay much stress, as an argument, in favor of retaining them in their *present* place in a course of liberal education ; though many, who oppose the study of these languages seem to reason as if they thought this their only use. In declining to lay much weight on this argument, we do not intend, by any means, to depreciate the treasures of learning which are contained in the languages of Ancient Greece and Rome. The relics which have descended to us from the ruins of the literature of these nations, are still, even at this day, exceedingly valuable, as containing much most interesting knowledge in various departments of learning. Nearly all that we know of the history of the other nations of antiquity, as well as the entire history of these illustrious nations themselves, is

contained in these languages, with all that we know of their arts and their political institutions. They contain, also, many excellent ethical writings, which, however defective in some important points, and though falling, as might be expected, far below the standard of christian ethics, abound generally with a much sounder morality, than those who have paid little attention to this subject, or who form their opinions from the uncandid representations of the enemies of ancient learning, might suppose. The Greek language in particular, (for on this head we can say little for the Latin), also contains specimens of poetry in every department, which have not only served as models to Europe for two thousand years, but with which we doubt whether the poetry of any modern nation would yet bear comparison.

But for a full display and a just appreciation of these treasures we have not a suitable opportunity at present, even did we think it all important to our argument. For such a purpose a long series of discourses would be requisite, and however useful such a course might be, as tending to give us correct views of what these nations have done in literature, and of the immense debt which we owe them, we could not in candor rest much weight on the number and excellence of their literary productions alone as an argument for spending, *at the present day*, an important period of life in acquiring their languages.

Were it our present purpose to vindicate the wisdom of our ancestors, at the period of the revival of letters, in giving the study of Greek and Latin such a conspicuous place in *their* course of education, we should need no other argument but this — armed with this alone we should readily overwhelm all opposition. We might show how much they gained, or rather that they gained every thing from the cultivation of these languages — that to this circumstance, not only they, but we through them, to this day, are (as has been already alleged) indebted for a large share of all that we approve in our literature, legislation and arts.

But the condition of these pioneers of modern learning, and *our* present condition are widely different. They possessed barren, uncultivated dialects, as yet not enriched with any native literature. They had neither poetry, nor history, nor eloquence, nor philosophy ; — nothing better than rude ballads, and insipid chronicles, and incredible legends of misnamed saints, in their native dialects. In this state of things;



the learned languages opened to them a vast mine of intellectual wealth. Instead of toiling in the slow and painful process necessary to create a new literature, here was one already formed for them, and which they had the wisdom to turn to excellent account. The effects of adopting this literature, already formed to their hands, were similar to those which have arisen from transporting into the forests of this New World, all the experience and improvements of the Old. In both cases the progress towards the highest excellence has been accelerated, perhaps, by centuries.

In accounting for the rapid progress which learning made immediately after the revival of letters, we think that due consideration has not been generally given to this circumstance. Whilst we give all the credit due to the new invention of printing, we do not adequately appreciate the influence of those stores of ancient learning, without which this art would, for a long period, have been comparatively useless.\* Of the wisdom, therefore, of our ancestors in giving these languages, and the literature which they contain, a most prominent place in their systems of instruction, there cannot, amongst intelligent men, as we think, be any question. They had, in fact, scarcely any thing else, which was worthy, according to our present notions of learning, to occupy the attention of a liberal mind. What a glorious emancipation for the human understanding to be delivered from the dry, knotty, uninteresting jargon of *the schools*, and to be introduced to the rich intellectual treat, which the elegant and finished productions of Grecian literature afford.

But (thanks to the efforts of our predecessors) we are *now* in a very different condition as regards literature from those who were the contemporaries of the revival of letters, and the first patrons of Greek learning. Many of the modern languages of Europe, and our own in particular, instead of being meagre and rude dialects, are enlarged by a vast accession of terms, borrowed almost exclusively from the Greek and

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\* We are ready, also, to forget how completely ancient learning was unknown and uncultivated in the western parts of Europe, till a very late period. The Latin language, indeed, was less or more cultivated in the Universities, from their first foundation; and was in most, if not all of them, the only language permitted to be used. But the Greek language and Greek literature, — the great original of which the Latin literature is but a tame, and too often spiritless imitation — were utterly unknown, even in Italy, till the times of Petrarch, till after the final destruction of the Greek Empire, and in the more western countries till a much later period.

Latin languages, and enriched by a literature formed in a great measure after Greek models, and by numerous translations, which, though certainly not in general remarkable for excellence, yet enable us to become acquainted with much of the most important knowledge contained in the ancients. Still, to the admirer of fine writing, much of the beauty and spirit of the originals, considered as works of *literary excellence*, is lost, even in the best translations ; and to him, who has any ambition to consult the primitive, and perhaps to this day, the purest models, whether in the arts, or in literature, we would repeat the counsel of Horace :

“ Vos exemplaria Græca  
Nocturna versate manu, versate diurna.”

But, for the purpose of obtaining, through the medium of their own diction, the information transmitted to us by the Greeks and Romans, or for the purpose of contemplating the ancient models, we could not in candor say that it were justifiable to subject all who wish to procure a liberal education to drudge so many years in learning their languages ; however strongly we should recommend this course to all who wish to view, in a satisfactory manner, the finest and most perfect specimens in the several departments of literature. Especially are we deterred from resting much weight on this argument, when we reflect, that, either through indolence, or want of taste, or the imperfect manner in which their early studies have been conducted, or the distracting avocations of active life, it is but a very limited number of all who attempt to acquire a classical education, who ever make sufficient progress to reap this advantage from it. Their acquaintance with the ancients, in most cases, remains miserably limited, and the difficulties of the language have not been sufficiently overcome to enable them to peruse a Classic with ease and satisfaction.

But there are other advantages arising from the pursuit of classical studies in our schools and colleges, which, though sometimes overlooked by superficial observers and reasoners on education, are, we think, more substantial in themselves ; besides being greatly enhanced, (especially in the present very imperfect state of classical education) by this circumstance, that even he, who makes but comparatively slow and unsatisfactory progress in the languages, shares in them in a



proportionate degree, as well as he who makes a greater proficiency.

One advantage of this description arising from the study of the Greek and Roman languages, is that it affords us a key, not to the literature of these languages alone, but also to *modern* literature.

Owing to the general introduction of Latin and Greek literature in our schools of learning, our own literature has been, as we have already said, fashioned after the ancient models. Our best writers have been deeply imbued with classical learning, and in order to understand them thoroughly and relish their beauties highly, it is requisite to possess some little tincture of the same learning. They abound in allusions which are not generally well understood by any but those who have some share of classical knowledge. They deal much in ancient mythology and ancient fable. Whether their taste in this matter is correct, or not, it is not our business at present to inquire. The fact is indisputable that a large number of our fine writers presuppose in their readers, a certain familiarity with classical learning; they write for such readers, and by such only can their merits, in many instances, be properly appreciated. Even some of our public orators still abound with classical allusions. In former times they abounded much more in such allusions than at present. Nothing was more common among our ancestors, than to make quotations from the Classics not only in the senate, at the bar, but even in the pulpit. Those who read the sermons of Tillotson, and still more those who read Barrow and the Commentary of Grotius, will find abundance of such quotations sprinkled over their pages. We do not, certainly, admire the taste of those who would introduce quotations freely in public discourses from languages not understood by the great majority of their hearers. We join heartily with those who would call the orator who did so a silly pedant. At the same time the classical scholar will feel reluctant to pass any strong censure on the illustrious men whom we have named, when he considers both the appropriateness of most of their quotations, and the vast learning and thorough acquaintance with ancient literature which they display. Nor would we go so far, even at the present day, as utterly to banish all classical quotations from writings of a purely *literary* cast, and intended chiefly to meet the eyes of the educated part of the community. To do so would, we think, discover an excessive fastidiousness. In an elegant production, of that

class which gracefully admits the ornament, nothing affords higher pleasure, to a man of letters, than the judicious introduction of an appropriate quotation from the ancient Classics.

But, whether right or wrong in point of taste, our literature — and especially our early literature — abounds with such quotations, and with continual allusions to the classics ; and we must either lose the full enjoyment of this literature, or continue sedulously to cultivate ancient learning. Modern literature may in fact be considered a continuation of Greek and Roman literature, rather than a literature original and independent either in its commencement or in its characteristics. And as it is both expedient and agreeable in learning the history of a nation to begin at the earliest period, and trace the progress of its infant institutions, so is it equally pleasing and advantageous to trace the progress of the literature of Western Europe from its *cradle* in early Greece.

It may be alleged in regard of this, as well as of the advantage which we have last considered, that it may be obtained without travelling beyond the precincts of our own language. In some degree it can. We might in the English tongue obtain considerable assistance in explaining the classical allusions of our own authors, and we might pass over the quotations from ancient writers, endeavoring to alleviate the mortification resulting from our ignorance by reviling them for their pedantry. But still we must be allowed to question whether any man can ever fully relish, or even fully understand some of the finest portions of our literature, without some share of classical learning. This advantage, thus stated, we leave our auditors to estimate for themselves. We have no design to rate it beyond its proper worth.

Another advantage of the study of the ancient languages, is that it enables us to trace with greater satisfaction the etymology of a large class of the words of our own language, and to understand more perfectly their exact force and meaning. It is well known that our language has borrowed largely from the learned languages not only directly, but also through the medium of the French. Hence the knowledge especially of Latin, gives a prodigious facility both in correctly apprehending the meaning of a vast number of our ordinary words, and in using them appropriately — a facility which, we think, is never possessed in an equal degree by the mere English scholar of the same rate of talents and erudition in every thing save the Classics. This is an advantage not easily overrated.

in the case of those who aim at writing their own language with elegance, or even with accuracy.

The Latin language affords the same, and still greater assistance in ascertaining the etymology of the other modern languages, especially those of the south-western portion of Europe, which stand in the relation to the Latin of daughters to a common mother. Consequently the acquisition of Latin affords surprising facilities to those who wish to become acquainted with any of these tongues. To him who wishes to acquire thoroughly Italian, Spanish and French, it is perhaps no exaggeration to say that it would be labor well spent to study the Latin first, for the sole purpose of learning these with greater accuracy, ease and expedition.

Such are, as it seems to us, the principal direct advantages to be gained by studying the ancient languages. They present us with a key by which to unlock *for ourselves* the treasures of antiquity ; thus affording us an opportunity of coming into more immediate contact with the minds of the great geniuses of Greece and Rome, and of appreciating more accurately the beauties of the models which they have bequeathed us in the various departments of literature. Secondly, the study of these languages serves as a very useful, if not an indispensable introduction to the higher literature of our own language. And, lastly, the Greek, but especially the Latin, affords most important help in the study of etymology ; not as a subject of literary curiosity, or philosophical inquiry only, but as an important assistance to the accurate knowledge, and appropriate usage of the terms of our own language.

Though any one of these advantages, considered separately, should not appear of sufficient importance to induce us to spend years in acquiring it, we can, at least, safely say that they are unitedly of such value that few, who have realized them, have regretted the time spent in attaining them, or could, were it possible, be induced to resign them for any reasonable compensation.

We now proceed to consider the advantages of classical learning, as affording a course of training for the youthful mind.

It is upon its usefulness for this purpose that we would chiefly rest the defence of the study of the Classics. For, highly as we appreciate the direct advantages which we have above mentioned, we should not think them alone sufficient to justify a *very general extension* of classical education.



But when in connection with these advantages we consider classical learning as a means of training and developing the mental powers, we think it possesses claims to a much wider diffusion, and to a much more careful cultivation than it has yet received among that class in our country which can afford the time and the means necessary for procuring any thing beyond a mere elementary education.

To this department of our subject we cannot do full justice at present without trespassing too largely on your time. We might indeed treat it very briefly, and perhaps with many of our auditors, who are predisposed in favor of the cause which we advocate, not unsuccessfully, by appealing to experience. We are persuaded that there is no individual of ordinary capacity who has studied the Classics, even with a moderate share of carefulness, for any length of time, who will not admit that he has found his faculties improved and expanded by this course of discipline. We think there are few even of those, who have not themselves enjoyed the privilege of a classical education, but yet have attentively observed the intellectual progress of others under good classical instruction, who will not admit that it has had a conspicuous influence in expanding and ripening their powers. We believe that there is little doubt entertained on this matter by practical teachers, who have themselves given instruction in the Classics, or who have conducted schools in which the Classics have been successfully taught. They will, perhaps universally, admit that their classical pupils make much more rapid progress in the development of their powers. We know that it is the testimony of some teachers — of teachers too, who are not themselves classical scholars, and who on that account may be considered as more impartial witnesses on this subject — that the classical part of their scholars besides learning their Latin and Greek, make at the same time greater progress in all their other studies. In the case of such pupils, when their studies are judiciously directed, so that they neglect no important branch of a good English education, it can scarcely be said that any time is wasted in learning the Classics; even were we to admit that the knowledge of them is of no direct value in after life, and even that the training — without any reference to its important bearing on the pursuits of manhood — is only useful in facilitating the acquisition of the other parts of learning. It is in accordance with our own experience in a large English and Classical school, that the classical pupils,

incorporated in the same classes and enjoying exactly the same instruction, usually excel those who attend to English studies exclusively, in every branch which they pursue in common, and are as rapidly and as thoroughly prepared for the counting-house. After candidly making all proper allowance for the circumstance that it is generally pupils of the best abilities who commence the study of the Classics, we are persuaded that the above facts can be fully accounted for in no other way but by admitting the favorable influence of classical instruction in developing and expanding the faculties of the youthful mind.

But, it may be more satisfactory to take a closer and less common place view of the subject — and to endeavor very briefly to analyse, or rather open up the way for an analysis of the advantages which arise from classical training.

There are two distinct purposes to which intellectual discipline may be directed. The first is to prepare us for the accurate investigation of truth ; the second to prepare us to communicate to others the knowledge which we have acquired. Persons who reflect on the subject of education may differ widely in their estimate of these two species of training. The few may prize the knowledge of the truth more than the facility of ready communication ; and the many will prize those attainments most, which are most likely to enable them to attract the notice of mankind, and to exercise a more conspicuous influence in society. But all judicious persons, however they may sympathise with those who love truth for its own intrinsic excellence, will admit that both species of training are necessary to a *useful* development of the intellectual powers. Whilst they admire truth, they will not forget the claims and the wants of society. They will not forget that our labors in the fields of knowledge, as well as in other fields, ought not to be consecrated to mere self-gratification alone, but also to the improvement and the amusement of our fellow-men. They will not, even, utterly forbid to listen to the call of a generous ambition, when it incites to struggle, ardently, but *honestly*, to obtain a niche amongst those who have gained to themselves immortal fame, and have at the same time enriched mankind by the treasures of their wisdom. Whilst, therefore, they despise the art of stringing together musical periods about nothing — words without wisdom — they will not depreciate the cultivation of solid and genuine eloquence.

It might, at first sight, appear that the preparation for the



investigation of truth has not only the priority in point of importance, but should have the priority in order in a judiciously regulated education. It may be said, what use in learning to communicate truth till we have first learned to acquire it? But a little examination will be sufficient to convince us that this is one of the many instances in which mere abstract speculation, unaided by the light of experience, might lead us astray from nature and from truth. It is obvious, to every experienced observer of the order in which the powers of the human mind are developed, that the faculty of communication takes the precedence of the faculty of reasoning — of reasoning, at least, in all its higher and more dignified functions. Though it is a good rule to think before we speak, yet the faculty of speaking, we must admit, displays itself much earlier than the faculty of thinking. In many, indeed, the former faculty seems to be the only one having connexion with the intellect, which ever attains to any considerable development; a development sometimes more gratifying to themselves than to their neighbors, — whilst the power of thinking — that is of deep and accurate thinking — either exists not at all, or remains completely dormant. But it is not the purpose of any judicious system of education to increase the number of mere talkers. There always has been, and we presume there always will be, without any artificial culture, an abundant supply, if not for the instruction, at least for the amusement — or it may be to try the patience of — mankind. Yet to find fault with this, were unphilosophically to find fault with the distribution which nature has made of her gifts, who has evidently designed that the great bulk of mankind should acquire all their knowledge from others, and by whose impulse they freely communicate that which they have freely received. But, farther, nature has obviously intended that not only the great mass of mankind, but even those who in after life, may become the profoundest thinkers, should receive their first knowledge in the same way. The child learns through the exercise of its imitative powers, to lisp its first accents, whilst it has no idea, or only a very confused idea, of the sense attached to them. And the boy is capable of learning the appropriate usage of language, as a vehicle of communication, before he is capable of being put in possession of the truths of abstract science, though digested by others and prepared for his use; and, consequently, long before he is capable of engaging successfully in independent research, ex-

cept on the plainest and easiest themes. From this it follows that though a pupil should be trained, from a very early period of his education, to the investigation of such subjects as are suited to his capacity, yet, in accordance with the example which nature has set us, the system of training for the purpose of communicating knowledge to others may, and ought, to be carried forward in advance of the other process, and may even be finished before it, if any part of man's education can with propriety be said to be finished in the present stage of his existence. The truth of this position will be obvious if we reflect that there are many men, who can never hope to add the slightest contribution to the already accumulated stores of thought, or even to follow, save at a very humble distance, the adventurous discoverers in the fields of science, who yet are reputed eminent for their literary attainments, and are conspicuously useful either as teachers of christianity, or the instructors of youth in knowledge, for which they are exclusively indebted to the researches of others. In the case of such persons it is all important that the power of ready and impressive communication should be thoroughly exercised; whilst their researches being in a great measure confined to a selection of the best guides to useful knowledge, a long course of training for this purpose is only of secondary importance.

So much being premised respecting the general design of early intellectual training, it will not be very difficult to show that classical instruction conduces powerfully to promote both the purposes which we have mentioned, and especially the latter.

As regards the first purpose of mental training, classical instruction when properly conducted, serves as a constant exercise in criticism, commencing with the lower and more minute verbal and grammatical criticism, and ending, when the course is sufficiently extended, with the higher and more philosophical criticism. It habituates the pupil to pay the closest attention to the sense of what he reads, (a habit which of itself constitutes a very important and essential part of a good education), as without this it is impossible that he can make any progress in the business of translation. Almost every time that he is obliged to have recourse to his lexicon, his taste, his powers of discrimination, are called into exercise in the selection of appropriate terms to express the meaning of his author. And his judgment is still more severely exercised in unravelling intricate constructions when they occur. The

parsing, in the commencement of his course, of *all* that he recites, and in his after progress, of every word or sentence which presents any difficulty, affords, as at present conducted by careful teachers, excellent training in the art of analysis, and might, with some judicious improvements, afford still better. We would observe, as we pass, that this is a part of classical instruction which we think might be simplified and improved, and much better directed to the development of the sense of the subject parsed; and this is its proper and only object, though one, which under the present system, a young pupil does not, in every instance, clearly discover. The improvements of modern times seem to be very slow in reaching this important branch of classical — and the same is also true of English — education. It is still handed down from one race of teachers to another, with the same imperfections, and the same barbarous, and to boys, unmeaning terminology, with which it was transmitted from the scholastic ages. But it would lead us into a tedious discussion to present our views fully on this subject. Besides, we should think it wrong to propose any sweeping innovation in a part of instruction so important, till the plan suggested as an improvement were very completely matured, and subjected to the rigorous test of experiment.

It may be objected to what we have said above, that, though classical instruction trains the mind to the investigation of truth, the subjects of investigation are in their nature trifling, and remote from the important concerns of human life, — the *mere philosophy of words* and not of *things*. In reply to this, we might ask, Is the vehicle by which we obtain nearly all our knowledge, and hold all our communication with our fellow-men, which constitutes one of the chief distinctions betwixt us and the lower orders of creation, without which our minds, even though possessed of all their present powers, would remain in a state of comparative darkness — a mere uncultivated waste — is this vehicle of thought, this glorious gift of our Creator, a thing of small importance? Besides, what species of training possesses closer analogy with the pursuits of the theologian, the lawyer, the statesman, the cultivator of polite and of useful literature, and especially the now rapidly increasing class of productive laborers in the various departments of human learning, who devote their time and their talents to the honorable employment of enlightening, or amusing their fellow citizens? — not to speak



of the less esteemed, but certainly not less useful class, whose *toils* are devoted to the improvement and direction of the powers of the youthful mind.

On this very point, at which the objection is levelled, classical learning has certainly a decided superiority over the study of the mathematics. And this study is perhaps the one of all others, which might be brought most successfully into competition with classical learning, as a means of training the intellectual powers. Whilst we are on this subject, and as we have not time to institute a formal comparison between these two rival courses of intellectual discipline, we may as well candidly admit the superiority of a mathematical education, (at least so far as the ancient Geometry forms a part of it), for some special purposes. It secures in the case of every successful student, more perfect habits of attention. It compels him to abstract himself more completely from all impressions of surrounding objects, not on account of any peculiar difficulty in comprehending the separate steps of the train of reasoning of which he must possess himself, but in order to preserve the concatenation of the successive acts of judgment uninterrupted, till he arrives at the conclusion. This not only strengthens the power of excluding every thing irrelevant to the present subject of speculation, but tends to improve the grasp of the understanding, its capacity of embracing at once an extensive subject in its most important bearings and details — an attainment which distinguishes the man of large and comprehensive views in every department of knowledge and in every situation in life, and which is absolutely necessary to all who would fill with advantage the more elevated stations in society, who would aspire to guide, in a judicious manner, the counsels of the community to which they belong, or to manage successfully extensive and complicated operations of any kind. We may also remark, though it belongs not exactly to this place, that the mathematical sciences train the mind to precision and methodical arrangement in the communication of its acquired stores of thought. But, as regards the objection stated above, a very little reflection will show that it applies to what are called the exact sciences more forcibly than to classical learning. It is not correct to say that the one treats of ideas, the other only of words, or the signs of ideas. The subjects of philology and of grammar are ideas as much as the subjects of the mathematics, and the former are certainly *far less remote* from the common employments of life, especially

amongst educated men. The kind of reasoning to which it trains the mind — that which deals in the probable, and pretends in most cases only to an approximation to absolute truth — is also the kind best suited to the ordinary affairs of life, to which the exact reasoning of the mathematician is generally wholly inapplicable.

As to the second object of intellectual training — the preparation of the student for the ready and accurate communication of his thoughts in speaking, or in writing — the advantages of classical learning are great and obvious. All that we have time at present to say in illustration of this part of the subject, — and all perhaps that it is necessary to say — is that classical instruction, when properly conducted, serves as a continued and most effective training in *English* composition. This we consider as by far the most important advantage which it affords; this in conjunction with some of the direct advantages, which we have enumerated above, we think, fully accounts for that decided superiority in the use of our own language, which it appears to us, that a good classical education always confers. The ancient author whom he translates, supplies the student with the thoughts which he is to clothe in appropriate language. The difficulty which is commonly encountered by those who attempt in any other way to instruct in composition — that the youthful scholar not having yet acquired a fund of ideas, only learns to string together unmeaning words, or borrowed phrases, to the perversion of his taste — is thus obviated, and facility afforded for cultivating the power of communication, (which, as we have already said, is earlier developed,) in advance of the power of investigation. It may be observed that the value of the Latin and Greek languages as affording an exercise of this kind, is much enhanced by the fact that their structure is so unlike that of the modern languages. Not only is their general structure different, but the separate terms, especially the abstract terms, express ideas which cannot in many cases be exactly represented, at least, by any single word in English. So that translation from these languages very frequently, especially when the subject treated is abstruse, when general and abstract terms, and particularly those expressive of mental qualifications are employed, amounts to nothing more at best, than approximation to the sense of the original, the merits of the translator being estimated by the closeness of his approximation without sacrificing the propriety of his



own idiom. He who will attempt to give in English the exact meaning of such a word as *honestas* will easily conceive what we mean ; he will probably find, that it expresses such a modification of thought, as we have no term to express. The same idea, or rather cluster of ideas, precisely so modified has, it may perhaps be found, no place in our philosophy, and therefore no name in our language. Hence it is, that the ancient languages afford much better exercise for the powers of communication than the modern ones which are commonly cultivated, the structure of these last mentioned languages, as well as the modes of thinking, and the philosophy and general sentiments of the nations which use them, being so much like our own.

It must be obvious to the experienced teacher, from the course which we have pursued in defending the study of the Classics, what are our general views of the manner in which this study should be conducted. The advantages which we value most can never be attained by a hasty and slovenly method of instruction. They can never be gained by the use of interlineary translations, or similar professedly short and easy methods. Such plans of teaching are predicated on very different views of the relative importance of the several advantages of classical learning from those which we hold. They propose only to facilitate the acquisition of some of the direct advantages which we have enumerated, — even here we think they fail, — whilst, as an instrument to train and cultivate the mental powers, they are wholly deficient.

As to the objections which are commonly made to classical education, we are compelled either to pass them over, or to dismiss those which we state with the briefest notice.

It has been objected that the study of the Classics tends to encourage licentiousness. It must be admitted that there are in the Classics many indelicate passages, that subjects are sometimes treated of such a nature, and in such a manner, as to suggest improper and impure ideas. Yet we think this evil has been much exaggerated. If we cannot bear plain and coarse expressions — and it is by these more generally than by licentious ideas that the Classics offend — we must banish much of our own early literature, and even the oracles of our holy religion from our schools. There is perhaps on this subject at the present day an over fastidiousness, which we may be allowed to add, is any thing but a correct index of the purity of our morals as compared with

those of our more plain-spoken forefathers. It must also be observed by all sensible persons that it is not that portion of our general literature — including the Classics — which is most offensive to fastidious ears, that is most dangerous, most calculated to corrupt. Besides, this evil to whatever extent it exists, or applies peculiarly to the ancient Classics can — and ought — to be removed in editions placed in the hands of youth, by judicious expurgation.

Again, it has been objected that the cultivation of classical learning is injurious to Christianity. We cannot at present enter into the discussion of this very serious objection, farther than to appeal to the argument drawn from experience, which we think is amply satisfactory, and even conclusive in this instance. When did Christianity flourish most and in the greatest purity? Was it in the first ages of the church, and since the Reformation, and consequently contemporaneously with the highest cultivation of classical learning, or in the dark ages, when the Greek and Roman authors in common with the scriptures of truth were left to moulder on the shelves of monasteries? Assuredly classical learning, instead of injuring her interests, has been the handmaid of Christianity, — her torch-bearer — in every period when her genuine influence has been most widely and most propitiously diffused.

In the same way we would deal with the objection, which some make, that the study of the ancient Classics inspires and cherishes bloody and revengeful feelings. We have heard the martial spirit, and the practice of duelling, (this practice, by the bye, was unknown to the ancients,) which have distinguished the nations of modern Europe, seriously attributed to the influence which the frequent perusal of Homer's sanguinary battles has had on the minds of the young. Here, certainly, the appeal to experience is sufficient to scatter the objection to the winds. Was Homer much studied in the times when duelling was invented, or introduced in Europe, or during the ages when this practice most prevailed? Were wars more frequent, more bloody and ferocious before or after the introduction of Grecian literature into our schools? Is the vindictive, the duelling spirit most prevalent at the present day amongst the cultivators of ancient literature, and in those parts of the world, — in those parts, for instance, of these United States, — where this as well as other branches of learning are most sedulously cultivated? Let these questions be

fairly answered, and then let the objection pass for what it may seem worth.

—“*Ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes  
Emollit mores nec sinit esse feros.*”

Such is an outline of the plan which we would adopt in defending the study of the Classics—an outline which we are conscious that we have been able to fill up very imperfectly. We think however that we have entered the proper field on which the contest must be eventually settled betwixt the foes and the friends of classical learning. They must dismiss appeals to mere generalities, and come to a close analysis of its supposed advantages, and on the decision, which after a careful examination may be established as to the comparative value of these, classical education must stand or fall.

It will be apparent from all that we have said on this subject, that we are in favor of a more general and more sedulous cultivation of classical learning, than exists amongst us at present. Yet should we be very sorry to claim for it an *exclusive* cultivation, to the neglect of other important branches of learning. Instead of curtailing the branches which are now taught in our schools and colleges, we should feel disposed to increase the number. Amongst other subjects possessed of great intrinsic excellence, and well adapted to the purpose of cultivating the higher powers of the mind, we may be allowed to mention the claims of *political philosophy* and *political economy* to much greater attention than is at present bestowed upon them. Nor is there any want of time to pursue a much more extended course than at present, could our youth be persuaded to remain at their studies a little longer, and not rush into business, or into professions before they have acquired that stability of character, and that elementary knowledge and training of their faculties which might contribute essentially to eventual success in their pursuits. It might be profitable both for old and young to reflect on the wisdom of the maxim, “*The more haste, the worse speed.*” The truth of this adage, we think, has received signal confirmation in the late disastrous prostration of our commerce. To whatever class, or party in the community we peculiarly attach the blame of this calamity, it is in the end to be attributed to an *infatuated haste to get rich*, and to a want of political and politico-economical science and wisdom ade-

quate to the successful management of the immense and rapidly increasing resources of this vast country. Our wealth, our resources, our enterprise have gone far ahead of our advances in that knowledge which is requisite to turn them to useful purposes. In addition to this, we seem, in our national affairs, unfortunately disposed to commit to the guidance of presumptuous ignorance those concerns which demand for their successful management profound knowledge and hard earned experience — as if it were our object to try the experiment, and ascertain how very little wisdom is necessary to govern the world. For the first mentioned evil, the remedy is obvious, and not beyond our reach; for the cure of the latter infatuation, if any merely human prescription can prove effectual, it is the same. Diffuse light — diffuse habits of sound and accurate thinking — diffuse manly, *truly* independent and virtuous principles.





## LECTURE II.

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ON

## MORAL EDUCATION.

By JOSHUA BATES,  
PRESIDENT OF MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE.



## MORAL EDUCATION.

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AMONG the various theories of morals, proposed and published to the world, and generally leading to the same practical results, *that* seems to me the most simple and the most easily illustrated and comprehended, — which makes the will of God, at once, the rule of action and the foundation of moral obligation. So far as the obligation is concerned, the theory may be thus stated : — all duty grows out of some relation ; and all relations, which impose duties, are constituted by a direct act of our Creator ; or they are formed by man, in obedience to a divine command, or, at least, in accordance with the divine will. Now of all the relations, whether natural or instituted, which exist among men, none is more important to human happiness, or more fruitful in responsibilities and prerogatives, than that, which obtains between parents and children. From it flow all the duties, which belong to education ; and all the rights, incident to those duties. In consequence of this relation, it becomes the duty of parents to “ bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord ; ” and to them, as a farther consequence of the same relation, belong all the rights, necessary to a faithful and successful discharge of this comprehensive duty. Both the obligation and the power may, indeed, be transferred temporarily, partially, and (in case of the death of parents, and perhaps in some other cases), entirely, to guardians and instructors. But neither the one, nor the other, can be renounced or cancelled ; while the relation itself, whether natural or assumed, remains. *They* always follow the relation, wherever it is found, in all its changes and modifications ; and just as far and as long, as

the relation is modified or transferred by civil authority, voluntary assumption, or mutual compact, *they* are charged with it, and become the duties and prerogatives of those, to whom the transfer of the relation is made. Hence the whole course and business of education, from infancy to childhood, from childhood to youth, and from youth to manhood, (by whomsoever conducted) should be conducted on the principles of the parental relation. All who have the guardian care and instruction of children and youth, are bound to do, and have authority to do, for their wards and pupils, what a parent should do for his children, in the same circumstances. They are required to treat them not as sentient and mortal creatures merely ; but as rational, moral and immortal beings ; — to endeavor, so far as the trust is delegated to them, and so far as they have assumed the responsibility, to train them for active and useful employment in this life, and for blessedness beyond the grave — to educate them in accordance with their nature and destination ; and thus to fit them to accomplish, in the best manner, the great purpose and end of their being. The subject of MORAL EDUCATION, therefore, becomes a subject of deep interest, and, as we shall discover in the sequel of this discourse, not inappropriate to the present occasion.

Education, in the most comprehensive sense of the term, denotes the whole training of the physical, intellectual and moral powers, by which a man is made what he is. It includes every influence which is exerted, and every circumstance which has a bearing, in the formation of character ; — every thing, which serves to awaken and control the original susceptibilities of human nature — to develop, exercise, and mature all the powers and faculties of soul and body. In the language of philosophical poetry (a little modified and extended) I add, ‘ ’tis education forms the *man*.’ The best system of education, therefore, is that, which so disciplines all the powers, and trains all the faculties of the child or youth, as best to fit him for duty and for happiness — as most thoroughly to qualify him for the station, to which he is destined, and the sphere in which he is to move — as to enable him most efficiently to act his part, and most perfectly to answer the great design of his existence in time and in eternity.

Were it my object to speak of the subject, at large, I should follow the ordinary division of *physical*, *intellectual*, and *moral* education. Physical education, I should say, in its highest perfection, is that system of diet, exercise and regimen, by

which health, strength and activity are best secured — the powers of the body so developed and trained, as to produce symmetry of form, and harmony and energy of action; and thus to render all the organs and functions of the physical system subservient to the higher and more enduring faculties of the man.

Intellectual education, I should add, does not consist, as some seem to suppose, merely or principally in the acquisition of knowledge. But it is such a disciplining of the mind, as prepares it for the acquisition, retention and communication, as well as practical application of knowledge; or, in other words, such a training of the intellectual faculties as gives vigor, proportion, and symmetry to the whole mind; or, in other words still, it is the formation of such habits of association, as brings the attention under the control of the will, gives acuteness and accuracy to the powers of investigation, and produces at once a ready and retentive memory, in connection with a lively fancy and a rich imagination. So far as education involves the acquisition of knowledge, its utility is principally incidental, or prospective. It is not so much the business of the teacher to crowd the mind of his pupil with facts, and instill into it his own principles and deductions; as it is to teach him the art of observation, classification, and investigation — to direct the inquiring mind in its researches after truth; in the often quoted and trite language of poetry, “to teach the young idea *how* to shoot.” There is, says Dr. Brown, a “*philosophical spirit* which is far more valuable, than any limited acquirements of philosophy; and the cultivation of which, therefore, is the most precious advantage, that can be derived from the lessons and studies of many academic years.” In accordance with this remark is the noted figurative observation of Locke, that “every man should know the length of his line” — or without a figure, should learn to limit his inquiries by the extent of his faculties, and confine them to the proper field of observation. Indeed, it is less the object of education to awaken curiosity, than to direct its course, and restrain its wild and impetuous flights. The perfection of intellectual education, by no means depends on the eagerness of research, or on the quantity of knowledge actually acquired. A man may have read much, and may remember all he has read; and yet be scarcely distinguished from an idiot; — he may still be destitute of common sense and practical skill. It has been well said by Dugald Stewart,



that "the most essential object of education is *first* to cultivate all the various principles of our nature, both speculative and active, in such a manner as to bring them to the greatest perfection of which they are susceptible; and *secondly*, to watch over the impressions and associations of early life, and thus secure the mind against the influence of prevailing errors; and as far as possible, to engage its prepossessions on the side of truth." The period of pupilage to the scholar, is like the time of apprenticeship to the mechanic; and the object of the one bears a strong resemblance to that of the other. It is not the business of the mechanic, during his apprenticeship, to accumulate a stock of lumber; but to exercise his muscles and acquire the use of his tools. So it is not the principal object of the scholar, during his pupilage, to lay up a stock of intellectual lumber — a mass of speculative and useless knowledge; but to learn the art of study, to ascertain the powers of his mind, and acquire skill in employing them; or, to continue the figure, it is to obtain the use of his intellectual tools, and give vigor and activity to his intellectual muscles. A well disciplined mind, in the course of its discipline, does indeed often make rich acquisition of knowledge. But it is knowledge classified, arranged, incorporated with the intellectual powers, and rendered a constituent part of the mind itself. It is not held by mere accidental or arbitrary association, as a thing of memory alone — the borrowed sentiments of other minds. It becomes his own. It is appropriated. Like the food which nourishes the body, it is digested and diffused through the whole intellectual system, sustaining and invigorating every part; or like the elements of nature, which go to support and increase a luxuriant vegetable, it becomes assimilated to the mind itself, conformed to its habits of association, and incorporated with its powers; causing it to expand, and giving it enlargement, strength and vigor.

Were it, as I said before, the object of this discourse, to treat of education at large, I should here enter upon the discussion of the question, which regards the comparative influence of native genius and well directed industry, in producing intellectual greatness. I should admit an original difference of intellectual capacity among men; equal, perhaps, to the difference in their physical organization. I should accede to phrenologists one grand point in their system, that there is a relation of the one to the other — of the mind to the body; especially so far, as it regards the size, and form, and healthy

state of the great organ of perception and thought and feeling. I should hence allow the impossibility, by any system of education or combination of circumstances, of bringing all minds to a common standard. And yet I should contend, (and contend most strenuously, because I consider the point of vital importance) that the actual difference in the intellectual characters of men, with a few extraordinary exceptions, depends principally on education. I should strenuously maintain, that industry and perseverance, under judicious guidance, will generally reach a point in the scale of usefulness and happiness, which uncultivated talents, however splendid, can never approach. For genius, undisciplined and uncontrolled, is, like the brilliant meteor, which with a dazzling light flits across your path, and in a moment disappears, rather bewildering, than aiding to direct your steps. While a common mind, — the mind of ordinary capacity, properly disciplined and improved by persevering study, resembles the polar star, which, though it may seem to shine but feebly, still sheds a steady light, and becomes an unerring guide to the nightly traveller.

I should, too, in this connexion, discuss the question often agitated, whether knowledge, refinement, and intellectual culture are favorable to personal happiness. And although knowledge perverted, and talents abused, like all the blessings of heaven, when misapplied, become sources of misery; and notwithstanding all that has been said and may be said, in praise of primitive simplicity and innocent inexperience — of ignorance, as the mother of devotion; and of stupidity, as the preserver from cares and woes, I should contend, that knowledge, under proper direction, is not only power, but a fruitful source of happiness — I should conclude with a distinguished philosopher, “that happiness, in so far as it arises from the mind itself, is always proportioned to the degree of perfection which its powers have attained.” I should say, that every degree of intellectual culture must increase the susceptibility of the mind, and of course the capacity for enjoyment. So that, other circumstances being equal and favorable, the degree of happiness, which any one enjoys, will depend very much on the degree of his intellectual improvement — on the harmonious and judicious cultivation of all the powers and susceptibilities of his mind.

But since neither physical nor intellectual education, however perfect, (were it possible to render them perfect, without

a corresponding cultivation of the heart) can secure to man the chief end of his being; I propose, as already intimated, to consider more particularly the subject of MORAL EDUCATION, in its bearings on personal happiness and the interests of society; and especially, in connexion with intellectual education.

Man is a moral being, possessing a moral nature — capable of feeling moral obligation — capable of discerning moral relations, and of regarding moral duties, — capable of understanding and obeying law; — sustaining the relation of absolute dependence on God; and capable of loving him and obeying his will; — sustaining various reciprocal and mutual relations to his fellow-men; and capable of loving them, and promoting their happiness. — Now this capacity renders him susceptible of moral education; and this education consists essentially in cultivating his moral powers and susceptibilities; and thus rendering him what he is capable of becoming and designed to be, “an adorer of God and benefactor of mankind.”

Among the moral powers of man, indeed the essential moral power, to which all others are subordinate and subsidiary, and without which all others would be perfectly inefficient, is *conscience*, or that capacity by which we are enabled instinctively and instantaneously, to feel approbation of what we view as virtuous and right, and disapprobation of what we count vicious or wrong: or, to give a definition more precise and exclusive, it is a susceptibility of pleasure or pain, as our actions agree or disagree with our views of duty — with the standard of moral obligation, which we have adopted. Whatever therefore has a tendency to increase, or diminish, this original susceptibility, must have an important bearing on moral education. For, like every other original principle of human nature, this may be cherished, purified, and strengthened; and all this must be done, to constitute what the Scriptures denominate “a good conscience:” or, on the other hand, it may be neglected, perverted, and stupified; or, in the language of Scripture, it may be “seared as with a hot iron;” and thus it becomes “an evil conscience,” — useless or worse than useless — failing to perform its appropriate office, as a prompter and reprove — silent, when its voice should be heard, like seven thunders; or speaking so feebly and equivocally, as only to mock and deceive.

A good moral education, then, must provide for the direct



culture of the conscience, by calling it early into exercise, and giving it frequent opportunities to act, as well as by guarding it in its feeble state, against the rude attacks of temptation, and aiding it in the execution of its incipient decisions. *Here* two opposite mistakes of parents, guardians, and teachers frequently occur. In some plans of education, arbitrary command and absolute authority become the invariable substitute for the decisions of conscience, directing every action, controlling every propensity, and leaving no opportunity for the conscience of the child or pupil to be consulted or exercised. And thus the capacity itself is never, or but very imperfectly developed. It becomes feeble and sickly; if, indeed, it has life and vigor enough to act at all, and form any thing like positive and independent character. Sometimes, on the other hand, the conscience of a tender child, or an inexperienced youth, is trusted too soon, or too far, — left to act and contend without aid or advice — exposed, single-handed, to the rudest and most violent attacks of the tempter; and thus it is often overcome and led captive, before it has gathered strength by exercise and discipline to meet its numerous enemies, as they proceed from a corrupt heart within, and a wicked world without. Thus in education, as in every thing else at the present day, we have our ultraism and our anti-ultraism. The true course here, as in most cases, unquestionably is the middle course: “*In medio tutissimus ibis*” — if you would secure to the child or youth you are educating, a “good conscience,” avoid the two extremes of entire control and unlimited exposure. Both are generally fatal to virtuous, manly, and independent character. So far as education can give direct assistance to conscience, it must be done by securing its early development, and affording it opportunity for full exercise and steady action; and, at the same time, by watching over its movements, throwing light upon its path; aiding it by advice, strengthening its decisions by authority, and every where guarding it, as far as possible, against the sudden and insidious attacks of temptation.

Closely connected with conscience, in constituting man a moral agent, is *Reason*; which if not in itself a moral power, is nevertheless indispensable to moral agency. Reason is that power of the mind, by which we discover relations; either at once, by a single comparison; or by deduction, or a succession of comparisons; and the result in both cases is a judgment. — Now as a moral power, or as connected with the



great moral power of which we have been speaking, it discovers, and leads us to feel, *moral* relations; and thus becomes subservient to conscience, and even necessary to its salutary operations. In moral education, therefore, the one must be cultivated in connection with the other. For if a man reasons wrong and forms erroneous opinions on moral subjects, his conscience, following his judgment, will fail to guide him in the path of duty; nor will it reprove him in opposition to his perverted judgment, even for the grossest iniquity. Thus the Hindoo mother sacrifices her infant child with the same approbation of conscience, that the christian mother feels; when, with sleepless solicitude, she watches over the sickness of the cradle, and strives to deliver her tender offspring from the jaws of death. Thus, too, the bloody persecutor drags his innocent victim to the stake, and applies to him the faggot and the torch, with as little compunction of conscience, as the faithful magistrate feels, when he pronounces the righteous sentence of the law on the murderer of his father, or the betrayer of his country. — Indeed, where our opinions are correct — our judgment sound, the approving or condemning sentence of conscience will harmonise with the decisions of Heaven. But where our opinions are erroneous, or our judgment perverted by passion and prejudice, our feelings of approbation or disapprobation will follow these erroneous opinions and this perverted judgment; and may come at last, as in the case of Saul of Tarsus, to be directly at variance with the will of God; so that we may persuade ourselves, that we are doing God service; while, like that bloody persecutor on his way to Damascus, we are opposing his cause, and breathing out threatenings and vengeance against his people. In forming rules for moral education, therefore, we should never forget, that while moral sensibility or conscience is to be carefully cherished and cultivated; reason must likewise be trained and exercised in connection with it, or it will dwell in darkness; and its movements will be uncertain and inefficient, giving neither purity nor stability to character. We should never forget, that the office of conscience is not that of an instructor; but simply that of a prompter or reprover; — that it was not designed to discover truth; — that it cannot of itself distinguish between right and wrong; — that it acts only in accordance with moral judgment — preconceived opinions — rules of action, already settled in the mind. We should remember, that conscience without reason is blind, — that its

monitions, while under the influence of erroneous opinions and a perverted judgment, are coincident with the dictates of a perverse and unsubdued will, producing nothing but obstinacy and rebellion against rightful authority, — indeed, that the very conscientiousness of an ignorant man often counteracts the best natural sympathies, and renders him a worse member of society. And remembering this, we should never forget the practical lesson, which it teaches, on the subject of moral education; nor fail to encourage the youth and even the child, to think and reason for himself, to investigate truth, and to form deliberate and independent opinions, on all practical subjects. I know a different course, in these days of double *ultraism*, has been recommended. It has been said, that children are not to be reasoned with; but instructed, directed, — commanded: they are to be taught to believe, because *you* affirm; and to act, because *you* make the requisition. The whole system of education, so far as it regards moral sentiment and moral conduct, must, according to this theory, rest on authority, be maintained by coercion, and result in blind submission. The very idea of furnishing evidence to produce faith, or secure obedience, is ridiculed, as a departure from *the good old way* of education, — as the fruit of modern degeneracy and rash innovation — as, at once, exhibiting and fostering a spirit of *radicalism*, insubordination and licentiousness. But it seems to me, that this theory, especially as it is served up, in a recent article in a popular publication, is *ultraism* of the worst kind; and carried to the greatest extreme. It must have originated with those, who are given to hypothesis — who have much theory, and no practical knowledge — to whom Providence has never committed the care of children, nor awakened in their bosoms the sympathies, which belong only to the parent, and flourish only around the family altar, whose sole “*blessedness*” (and if these sentiments are to be retained may it ever be their state,) is that of “*single life*.” Now while I admit, that there is an extreme of weak indulgence in education; and, that the tendency in this country, for the last half century, has been toward that extreme; I am obliged to contend, that the doctrines recently advocated, and to which I have just alluded, involve a grosser absurdity, and would if generally adopted, lead to more pernicious consequences, than the most extravagant innovations of the wildest enthusiast. While I would encourage obedience — even implicit obedience; I enter my protest against the doctrine of

*passive* obedience. Obedience truly we must have — obedience to authority ; but let it be *active* obedience to *rightful* authority. While too, I would advocate the cause of faith — if you please, *implicit* faith ; I must contend for a *rational* faith, in opposition to blind credulity — for a faith resting on conviction, supported by evidence, and “working by love.” Against the theory of education, which thus rejects all appeals to reason and conscience — sympathy and affection — which demands passive obedience, implicit confidence, unconditional submission, I again, and forever, enter my protest. If you would educate children and youth, to be men — *moral* men, to act for themselves, and to act from principle, you must encourage them to think and judge, as well as feel and act, — you must appeal to reason, strive to awaken conscience, and aid them in forming habits of reflection, thorough investigation, and firmness of purpose. You must not appeal to the rod, even in training the earliest childhood ; much less, in controlling the wayward propensities of youth ; till you have exhausted the resources of moral power. Where this, after a thorough trial fails — where the understanding has already become darkened, and the eye of reason blinded, — through the influence of passion, and prejudice, and vice ; or where the will has usurped the place of conscience ; — where all appeals, both to the reason and the heart, prove utterly in vain, resort must be had to physical force, or some other coercive measures. And here the inspired direction of the wise man comes in, and applies in full force : “ Chasten thy son, while there is hope ; and let not thy soul spare for his crying.” In cases of obstinacy and perverseness, all reasoning and persuasion are vain ; here stern authority must be exercised, till submission is produced. But in all ordinary cases, corporal punishment is unnecessary ; judicious and persevering appeals to reason and conscience, both with children and youth are sufficient for all the purposes of government, in the family and in the school. At least, it is always safe to begin with these. By adopting the other course — by beginning with the exercise of authority, and thus neglecting to cultivate, and call into exercise, the moral power of children and youth, you may indeed succeed in procuring immediate and temporary submission ; but you fail of teaching them, what they most need to learn, *self-government*. You fail of forming virtuous and manly character ; — *you train up a generation of slaves* — you educate your children to become fit subjects for the Pope of

Rome, or the Autocrat of Russia ; but you do all you can to render them unfit for American citizens, Christian freemen, denizens of Heaven.

Thus in every good system of moral education, reason, in connection with conscience, must be cultivated, exercised, and to a certain extent, left to follow out its own conclusions, free from the shackles of human authority. But since reason, at best, is exceedingly limited in its researches, and peculiarly liable to error in its conclusions, — since it is chained down to earth and limited by time — since its observations cannot reach other worlds, nor its eye penetrate the darkness of the grave, it must be aided by revelation ; or it will fail to enlighten conscience, and guide securely in the path of duty and the way of life. You cannot take a single step in the business of educating immortal beings for immortal life, without the aid of that gospel, which “brings life and immortality to light.” If, then, you would train your children to virtue and happiness, you must proceed to the work, with the Bible in your hands, and the spirit of the Bible, or rather the Spirit of God in your heart ; and you must so proceed, as to place this blessed book open, in the hands of your moral pupil, and lead him to read, believing, and seeking the same Spirit to open his heart and instil into his bosom the sentiments and principles, which these Holy Oracles inculcate. Any system of moral education, which excludes the Holy Scriptures, must fail — forever fail, of securing the great object of moral discipline. Without the Bible you may, indeed, produce external morality — mechanical virtue — passive obedience to human authority ; but you can never thus form a holy character, for the service — the everlasting service and enjoyment of a Holy God, — a character positively virtuous, resulting from principle, producing happiness, and enduring forever.

Another part of the human constitution, capable of being modified by education ; and on account of its influence on moral character, requiring great care to secure its full development, and to furnish it with due restraint and proper regulation, is *imagination*. Without stopping here to define the term, I may remark, that all our sympathies and sensibilities depend very much on the vividness of the conceptions which awaken them. If, therefore, action is desired ; and if activity is superinduced by feeling, it is evident that the more lively the imagination, the more powerful will be the excited emotion, and consequently the more prompt and vigorous the resulting



action. Hence the cultivation and due regulation of the imagination become important, in a system of moral education — indispensable, indeed, to exalted virtue, to pure and permanent felicity. And hence peculiar watchfulness and care are requisite, lest this power in the youthful mind be suffered, on the one hand, to slumber, till sensibility dies, and the age of feeling is past ; or, on the other, be permitted to run wild, till the awakened feeling breaks forth, like a mountain torrent, overpowering the judgment, and leading to unrestrained action and the inconsistent ravings of the wildest enthusiasm ; or, what is worse still, be allowed to rouse the sympathies and play upon the sensibilities, while there is no room for action, and of course no active principles formed ; till these susceptibilities are completely exhausted — till the springs of moral action lose their elasticity and power, and all moral sensibility is eradicated from the soul — till, in the language of sacred metaphor, the *heart is hardened*, the *conscience seared*, and the man *past feeling* ! — It is a law of our nature (says Bishop Butler, and we may add a law exhibiting the wisdom and goodness of our Creator) “ that passive impressions are weakened by repetition ; while active principles are strengthened by exercise.” Thus the emotion of pity, or compassion, is diminished by repeated scenes of distress ; while, in the meantime, the principle of benevolent action, if kept in exercise, gathers strength by practice, at length settles into a confirmed habit of doing good, and will sometimes continue to operate powerfully and efficiently, almost without emotion. But, if no action follows the emotions of pity in their incipient state, and the susceptibility be suffered to wear away, and spend itself in unavailing sighs and tears, without establishing any active principle or forming any active habit, the very foundation of this virtue will be torn away ; and the child or youth thus dealt with, will grow up to vice, hardness of heart, and perhaps deeds of cruelty and blood. Hence the importance of securing to the cause of virtue the first awakened emotions of the heart, by giving them proper direction, and affording them opportunity to settle into principle and flow out in action. Hence, too, the danger of all excitement, which does not lead to action, or, at least, to a fixed and determined resolution, which partakes of the nature, and in a moral view, constitutes the essence of action. Hence, I may add, the pernicious consequences of novel reading and theatrical amusements, inasmuch as they rouse the imagination and awaken

the sensibilities, often beyond the scenes of real life ; and when there is no call for action, nor scarcely any for forming the purpose of action ; inasmuch as the sensibilities of our nature are thus exhausted, the sympathies worn away, and the very foundations of virtue removed, before any habit of action is formed, or any active principle is superinduced. I know of no consideration of greater practical importance in its bearing on moral education, or more worthy of the regard of parents and teachers, than this. I have not time, however, to illustrate and enforce it, in this place. Let it then be simply observed, that, in order at once, to develop, exercise, and control, the youthful imagination, and thus secure its influence to the cause of virtue and happiness, the whole course of early reading and observation should be watched over with parental solicitude, and directed by great wisdom and practical skill.

To these remarks on the culture and training of the conscience, the reason, and the imagination, I might add particular observations on the means of directing and controlling the passions, appetites, and various propensities ; indeed, all the original susceptibilities and powers of the human mind. They are all capable of being modified by external circumstances ; and are, therefore, more or less subject to the influence of education. But the statements already made, and the illustrations already given, present a view of Moral Education, sufficiently broad and extensive, for the purposes of this lecture.

The first practical observation, which this view of the subject suggests to my mind, is, that moral and intellectual education should never be separated. Indeed, the connection is so intimate, that neither of them can be carried to a high degree of perfection, without the aid of the other. Virtue is always favorable to high intellectual attainments, and to deep and persevering research after truth and science. While a well cultivated mind with enlarged and correct views of truth is essential to the exercise of the higher virtues, and to all successful efforts in the cause of benevolence and human happiness. It is true, a man may be a good man — pious and benevolent, with little knowledge and a contracted intellectual training ; but his piety will be likely to degenerate into bigotry or fanaticism ; and his benevolence into a sickly sensibility, or a pernicious liberality ; at best, his good influence must be comparatively limited. It is true, likewise, that native genius, with the facilities now afforded for literary acquisition, though

connected with licentiousness in sentiment and practice, may sometimes shoot forth its branches, covered with the richest foliage, and producing a luxuriant growth of fruit, beautiful to the eye and sweet to the taste. But its leaves will soon wither, and its fruit will always prove poisonous. The most brilliant talents, and the highest intellectual attainments, without moral and religious principle, will only enlarge the capacity of the possessor for mischief and misery — will make him more wretched in himself, and more injurious to the character and happiness of all, whom his influence can reach. Let moral and intellectual education, then, never be separated. If in any case the former must be limited, let the latter be limited with it. If the latter be granted upon a large and liberal scale, let the former come in for an equal share of interest and attention.

Hence I observe, *secondly*, that in every school and literary institution, from the highest to the lowest grade, provision should be made for moral and religious instruction. I know, it has been objected, that in these days of division and party strife, such instruction is liable to degenerate into mere dogmatism on the one hand, and blind credulity on the other. Such a result ought certainly to be deprecated. Against the theory of education, calculated and designed to produce it, I have already entered my protest. And I now add, against every thing which has the least tendency to such a result, let provision be carefully made. Let no institution of learning, especially if it be a public incorporated institution, be placed under the exclusive patronage and control of any particular denomination of christians. Let the common school and the college be open, and equally open, to all. There let all stand on equal ground; and be encouraged alike, to inquire after truth with the utmost freedom, provided it be done with candor and reverence. Let all, who seriously worship God, be permitted to worship in the place and in the manner, which best harmonize with their views of truth and duty. Let there be no constraint placed upon conscience. Let these precautions be taken, and these rules observed; and moral and religious instruction may be freely and fully imparted, without even the charge of sectarian influence, without complaint, except from those who are opposed to all moral and religious instruction, every where; — “who love darkness and rejoice in iniquity.” — The experiment has been fairly made, in many of our colleges and academies; and always, I believe,

with complete success. Complaints of partiality have, indeed, sometimes been made, but they might generally be traced to misapprehension or designed misrepresentation. I might appeal to any, and every serious, intelligent young man who has been educated at the college with which I am connected, — an institution, I may be permitted to say, highly favored of Heaven and distinguished for its religious character, — as a witness on this subject — to declare whether he ever suffered the least inconvenience from his peculiar views, or his attachment to any particular denomination of christians. Some may have entered with fearful apprehensions, suggested by false reports; but none, (I speak of serious, intelligent men) ever came forth, complaining of unkind treatment, through sectarian partiality on the one hand, or antipathy on the other. As long then as a literary institution does not assume a sectarian name, nor exhibit a sectarian character, nor even become connected with any peculiar ecclesiastical organization — as long as all the students are permitted to attend public worship, where they or their parents and guardians choose, religious instruction cannot degenerate into sectarian bigotry, nor invade the rights of conscience. The experiment, I say, of imparting moral and religious instruction, without interfering with the peculiar views and conscientious practices of any serious person, has been made; and made with complete success, — on the other hand, I now add, that the attempt to establish and sustain institutions of learning, without religion, or religious instruction, has likewise been made; but the attempt, in every instance, with which I am acquainted, has resulted in an entire failure; or the failure has been prevented by a complete new-modeling of the plan. And so intimately are moral and intellectual education connected, and so mutually are they dependant on each other, that we may safely conclude that the result of every similar experiment will be the same.

Against the position we are maintaining, it has been farther urged as an objection, that there cannot be much attention paid to the subject of religion in a literary institution; — especially as the subject, in these days, is made so exciting and engrossing, without encroachment on the hours of study; and of course, without depressing the standard of scholarship. Now suppose this were true, in some extreme cases, would the objection even then be valid? — would it justify, in a system of education, a disregard to the most interesting and mo-



mentous subject, which can be presented to the human mind? — would a little more abstract science, or polite literature, compensate for the want of the practical science of “life and immortality” — for the desecration of talents — for the loss of the soul! But it is not true; — as a general statement, it is wide from the truth. Idlers, to be sure, will be idle, whether under the cloak of religion, or in the undisguised garb of infidelity and licentiousness. Still attention — deep and absorbing attention to spiritual and eternal things, need not, and generally does not retard the progress of intellectual improvement. It reclaims from indolence and vain pursuits, more hours than it demands for the service of the Redeemer in acts of devotion. Where one youth is drawn away from his studies, and retarded in his literary career, by undue attention to the subject of religion, and excessive solicitude for the salvation of his soul, many, in seasons of general inquiry, and “times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord,” are reclaimed from a course, which would have ended in dissipation, idleness, and ruin. And not a few seem to awake, for the *first time*, to the pursuits of learning, when they are thus roused from their moral lethargy. It cannot, indeed, be denied, that a revival of religion, in a literary institution, as well as in every other community, with all its rich and precious blessings, often comes attended with much evil. Like every other blessing, when abused, this becomes a curse to those who pervert or despise it — who harden themselves against correction, resist the kindly influences of the Spirit of truth and love, ridicule the work of the Lord, and reproach and revile those, who are employed, as his instruments, in carrying it forward. But shall we forego the great and permanent good, through fear of the temporary and limited evil? Because light rejected, and privileges abused, increase guilt and condemnation in those, who close their eyes against the one and pervert the other, shall we strive to conceal the light, and tear away the most precious privileges, from those who love them, and to whom they are a “savor of life unto life?” Because moral and religious instruction may be disregarded, and being disregarded, become the occasion of aggravated guilt and increased condemnation to some, shall we withhold this instruction from all? Because *he* that resisteth the Spirit of God, is in danger of being given over to “hardness of heart and blindness of mind,” shall we cease to pray for those spiritual influences by which alone men are sanctified and saved?

Because some young men of licentious principles, with hearts already hardened, and consciences already seared, creep into our colleges and academies, and there profane the name and word of God ; and do despite to the Spirit of his grace, shall we all cease to adore that name, read that word, and pray for that Spirit ; and thus give up all efforts to promote the cause of the Redeemer, lest these enemies of the cross of Christ should be offended, and take occasion to blaspheme ? No ; no ; when the moral and religious influence, which has so long been diffused over most of the literary institutions of New England, shall be withdrawn, they will not be worth preserving — their light will have gone out, and their glory will have departed forever. No ; no ; let us never cease to pray for the diffusion of this heavenly grace upon them ; nor fail to exert ourselves to preserve and increase this benign influence over them ; though some, (as scoffers ever have done) continue to mock, despise, wonder, and perish !

A *third* obvious remark, suggested by the view we have taken of this subject, is, that the Bible ought to be used in all our schools from the highest to the lowest, either as a reading book, or a classic — either to be studied in the original languages, or to be read and expounded in our vernacular tongue.

Another equally obvious and important practical remark is, that a good moral character and correct moral sentiments are indispensable qualifications in a teacher of children and youth, — qualifications, for the want of which, no intellectual qualities or literary and scientific attainments can atone. But time will not allow me to attempt an illustration of these and other practical remarks, which naturally flow from this copious subject.

To induce parents, guardians, and instructors, with all, who are so situated as to be able to exert an influence, direct or more remote, on the cause of education and the destinies of the rising generation, to apply the principles of this discourse to practical purposes, both in the family, in the primary school, and in the academy or college, let the importance of the subject, in its bearing on individual character and happiness, and on the preservation of our civil institutions, and the welfare of our country, be carefully considered.

*Parents, Guardians, Instructors*, the consequences, which are to flow from the manner in which you regard and treat this subject, are of no ordinary character. They are of great moment and permanent interest, extending to your country

— your whole country, and the world; and taking hold on eternity. Were the children whom you are educating, and the youth under your care and instruction, designed to live for a few days or years only; and then to die like the beasts that perish — die, and lose all their powers and susceptibilities — die, and cease to be: — or were you and they in a land of despotism, where no one is permitted to think or act for himself, *Moral Education* would be impracticable; or, if in any measure practicable, of little importance. To attempt to train children or youth to the exercise of reason and self-government, would then be a vain and useless attempt. — But you are not thus situated. Nor are the objects of your guardian care and parental solicitude, the mere children of earth and time. They are moral agents, and accountable beings. They possess immortal souls. They are in a course of education for eternity. They are capable of action; voluntary action; in its consequences, never-ending action. They are susceptible of happiness and misery — endless happiness and eternal misery. And this happiness, or this misery, will depend on the characters they form — on their principles and habits — in a large sense, on their moral education. You live, too, in a land of liberty, under free institutions; where freedom of inquiry, freedom of speech, and freedom of action, are enjoyed in a high degree; — where men possess as great a measure of personal liberty as is consistent with public safety, and social order. Much, therefore — very much depends on the fidelity with which you discharge the duties, that result from your relation to your children, your wards, your pupils; — much, as it regards their happiness here and hereafter; and much, as it regards the institutions and welfare of our beloved country. What is to become of these institutions, and this country? How are they to be preserved? Do you answer, by intellectual education — by diffusing knowledge through all the ranks of society? This, unquestionably, is important — indispensable to the preservation of civil liberty and to the security of social order. But will this alone accomplish the object — is this the grand conservative principle of our government? Of what avail is knowledge, without virtue — intelligence, without moral principle — the education of the head, without connecting with it the education of the heart? The tendency, as it regards moral influence on political action, in our country, seems to be continually downward; and unless this downward course should

be speedily and effectually arrested, it must, sooner or later, sweep away our free institutions, and bring upon the country the desolating scourge of anarchy, or the iron hand of despotism ! I dare not look forward upon a scene so dark and dismal ! I dare not contemplate in prospect the recurrence of a French revolution, on American soil ! I dare not anticipate the time, when infidelity, licentiousness, and violence, with giant-strides may traverse our country, in all its length and breadth ; deluging it in blood, and sweeping it with the besom of destruction. I would rather turn from this dark side of the picture ; and though it may prove but an optical illusion, view a brighter scene. I would rather indulge the hope, that some new and mighty moral influence, under the fostering hand of education, and through the kind interposition of Providence, may come in, and stay this downward course — sustain our tottering institutions, and save our country !





# LECTURE III.

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ON THE

BENEFICIAL, MORAL,

AS WELL AS

INTELLECTUAL TENDENCIES OF THE KNOWLEDGE

AND

STUDY OF NATURAL HISTORY.

By JOHN LEWIS RUSSELL.



## ON THE STUDY OF NATURAL HISTORY.

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WERE we to picture to ourselves a being, endowed with all the natural faculties peculiar to humanity, and possessed of every advantage which the gradual expansion and development of these faculties have given, — the united wisdom of the past and present at his control ; yet a stranger to this world, but suddenly introduced to its glorious panorama of natural and artificial economy ; could we see him, with a glance penetrating the secrets of Nature, and taking cognizance of every means to the improvement of the human race ; could we read his feelings and judge of his impressions, could we analyse his ideas respecting the wisdom displayed in the fitness and design of such a plan — and still farther, could we suppose him acquainted with the actual condition of the human race, its progress in truth, its advances in knowledge, its acquirements in actual good, its use and abuse, neglect and improvement of such privileges — methinks we should perceive in his expression, a mingled degree of astonishment at the few mighty strides towards the perfect, and a no less degree of wonder at the great want of a proper spirit in the multitude.

In this fanciful sketch of the character and opinions of some celestial inhabitant of another sphere — a faint and dim semblance of the attainment of goodness and wisdom in a spiritual and future condition, — we may perceive what is the true signification and how great the extent of that all-absorbing, deeply interesting subject, for which this Convention have met, to devise schemes effectual in its onward progress and constant advancement. Thus the perfect development of every power and faculty of mind and body, through the grad-



ual, but certain operation and expansion of the organic and spiritual functions, following the wise economy of the laws of nature and mind, is in truth Education : and all short of this is but a partial and limited view of its real designs. While reason maintains its supremacy over mind and body we are pupils ; Revelation and Nature are our great teachers. As we become the more proficient scholars, we are the more humble and zealous seekers for truth ; in intellectual and spiritual progress better prepared for that all perfect state where we shall " know as we are known."

But pupils though we all are in the great truths of the visible and invisible world, we are in turn called to be instructors to others younger and more ignorant than ourselves. No greater or more fearful duty do we owe to others than the training of the young and pure mind. Like a valuable and rich gem in the hand of the artist, it depends on ourselves, whether by our skill we make it doubly valuable, or by inadvertency render it less brilliant than in its native beauty. It is to be presumed then, that on a subject of such importance and thrilling interest there should exist as many modes of operation as there are operators. The sagacity and combined efforts of the philanthropic and of the physiologists of mind, if I may be allowed such an expression, have already done much towards a just appreciation of the subject. We must hail with delight the improvement which we daily and hourly see introduced into our schools ; as also the tendency of such efforts towards a correct education. Facts are beginning to be more appreciated in their connexion with principles, and theory when associated with practical truths. The young mind is now led by analysis and personal observation to certain results. The ingenious "why and wherefore," is expected and sought instead of the mere assumption. The youth is recognised as a reasoning being, instead of the curious, but almost artificial machine. He is, or may be, the younger companion of the master, treading together the delightful path of science for a mutual investigation of truth.

But although much has confessedly been done, much more remains to be accomplished. The attention that has been awakened to this momentous subject, is but the beginning of better things. A subject too so vast, we may almost say illimitable, must require, not only combined effort, but a slow, patient and constant attention. We are therefore to bring forward every possible means, which differ at sentiments and

views of others can offer. We are to amass facts, collect theories, and weigh opinions, that with a full and patient investigation the result may be as glorious as the occasion and subject demand. Let each advocate for education, and each patron of learning cast his mite into the treasury, that among the various offerings there may be found something of real worth.

With these sentiments, and in accordance with the spirit of this institution, I offer you a few remarks on a subject which I consider of great and practical value in the formation of the human character both in a moral and intellectual point of view.

Among the various objects of wonder and of curious design, our celestial visitant was introduced to the beautiful and magnificent order of the natural world. With his perceptions and acquirements we may suppose him capable of appreciating to its full value, the importance of this system to the promotion of man's improvement. He would be able to see in its full extent the peculiar adaptation of its design and end, to the happiness of the human race. With his extended vision of intellectual light he would trace those hidden and overlooked sources which have not or may not have, been sufficiently investigated.

In the early history of the human race, it is to be presumed, that with the infancy of the mental powers, there should have been provided lessons for reflection and improvement properly adapted. Such the Author of Creation has established. The grandeur and simplicity of His works impressed on every object of matter and sense did not fail to attract that attention for which they were designed. Thus, we have some dim allusion to this, in the succinct account of the studies and occupations of the progenitors of the human race. Food, raiment and shelter constituted the prior wants. To their gratification were the first efforts of mind directed. Next, the rudiments of a religious principle would be naturally developed through the gratification of the senses. The curious eye would receive impressions of beauty, uninfluenced by habit or opinion. The wonderfully constructed ear would, delighted, catch the chorus of praise so constantly ascending to heaven; and while beauty and harmony were combined to delight and instruct, the first impressions of the good and the excellent would be insensibly imbibed.

Next in the order of things, the elements of the material world would furnish subjects for particular attention and study.

The grander and more mysterious would attract the earliest regard. Though connected with earth in a more immediate relation, the mind would strive to soar to heaven. The dazzling splendor of a midnight sky, and the silent yet awful changes which were visible in its operations, would not fail to expand and develope the faculties, which would fain read and investigate somewhat of those curious bodies so distant, and yet so remarkable. The discoveries of modern science and the certainty of its truths, instead of diminishing our wonder, have introduced us to greater sources of admiration and delight. We may easily conceive the effect of a more comparative ignorance than our own, on the wonder-stricken mind.

But as a more extended information gained among men, the grander and more striking objects of nature, while not entirely overlooked, would cease to attract such universal attention, and the minuter portions of the stupendous whole would be scanned. From this time, science would assume a form and be ranked among the greatest objects of acquisition. Not only would the skill and ingenuity of the artificer be improved by an investigation of the laws of the natural world, but that wider, better, higher object attained, the expansion of the glorious attributes of mind. Principles would be studied to develope a more efficient practice, while at the same time the simply useful and necessary would be accompanied with the really exalting and refined. The silent, unobtrusive influence of the one would be no less observable on the moral and intellectual character, than the more tangible and utilitarian in the sterner wants of society ; while the application of patient research into the minutæ of matter would give greater cause for rational, dignified attention and admiration.

Such then is the true end and aim of knowledge, which, while possessing no inherent value, is capable of conferring by a proper use an immense and fearful power. The richest and costliest gems of truth, may be stored within the mind and hidden from view, but it requires the careful and curious labor of the mental artisan to cause them to sparkle and dazzle in their full splendor by some ingenious fabrication. The greatest discoveries of modern times have been the results of aspiring and untiring genius in the exercise of mind on the most ordinary, overlooked subjects. Some of the more immediate and mysterious qualities of the magnet were long known, before the hardy navigator could cross the track-



less ocean by its power and application. And so in the moral and intellectual creation, the all glorious attributes of mind and heart were unknown and unexplored, until a dignified faith revealed their energy and influence.

It is this self-same principle of knowledge to confer power, which connects it so intimately with education. But education has been generally understood to consist, in the amassing of simple facts, pouring into the mind inapplicable theories, heaping up the treasures of knowledge, without a simultaneous bestowal of the means of using them. Thus science became desecrated and degraded. The wise, instead of being the benefactors of the world, were wise for selfish ends, and learning, instead of expanding the human powers, and improving the character, rendered its disciples arrogant and vain. For ages, the physical sciences were peculiarly obnoxious to this charge. Employed for selfish ends, or to vainly investigate the profound secrets of futurity, they were snatched from general use. The absurd speculations of the misnamed philosopher, and his almost idle investigations served to close the hitherto wide-spread pages of truth, to the less gifted in the wisdom of the schools. A consequent neglect to read and to improve from such a beneficent and common source became universal, while a contemporaneous and simultaneous mistake, respecting the true end of education has continued to the present day.

The almost boundless field of observation amidst the different objects of the material universe, the tracing of effects to causes — ends to means, — thus setting forth to view and comprehension what is technically called the laws of nature, constitute the physical sciences. Thus we perceive in all the phenomena of creation a certain degree of regularity easily traced to a few simple principles. The vast creation, from the most distant world of light, to the minutest monad, is susceptible of being made a subject for improvement. A great distinction is however obvious, between the study of organic and inorganic matter, of the laws which govern, and the peculiar economy which causes them to subsist. The shooting of a crystalline body into its modification and form is referrible to one cause, while its first creation as a substance belongs to another. The causes which produce electrical or magnetic phenomena are essentially distinct from those which are seen developing in the phenomena of life. The surprising order



of the planetary system, differs from the effects observed in the periodical changes of the vegetable kingdom. A different system of study will be requisite, and different results obtained. The patient anatomist may lay bare, with consummate skill every nerve and muscle, exhibit every vein and artery of the human eye, but he will vainly strive to find in them, the laws of vision and by what means the rays of light are enabled to paint on the retina the inverted image. He will show you the beautiful construction of each part to produce the result, but the principles which are efficient are not inherent in the materials of his investigations. It is the province of the geologist to descend with you, into the caverns of the earth, for records of the history and age of this planet, or to ascend the towering height of the loftiest mountain peak to ascertain the power of volcanic agency in producing its present appearance; but the principles of another branch of human science has enabled the astronomer only to instruct you respecting the conformation of the moon, its craggy heights, or its atmosphere. Two distinct branches of study are thus exhibited. They are called natural philosophy and natural history. It is with the latter that I have to do.

At first sight and to the careless observer the latter might appear of inferior value and of secondary importance. This theory may perhaps explain in some measure, the reason of its comparative neglect in the means of education. Without entering into any comparison of the merits of each, it will be my endeavor to show the vast importance of a closer and more general attention among those, who are interested in the great subject of education.

We have already seen that a very early interest in the objects of nature must have been manifested among mankind. Such an interest might be regarded as the first progressive step from barbarism to civilization. The first ideas of majesty, excellence and beauty were undoubtedly conveyed to the mind through these. The mental faculties were in their infancy, and the instruction necessary to their state were such as were highly suitable and could not fail. Such an order still exists. Thus we may perceive a striking analogy between the infantile condition of the human race then, and the same powers of mind in the young now. To the simple and uninstructed mind of every child, these identical lessons of majesty, excellence and beauty are familiar and perceptive. Mark the early inclinations and study the character of their tastes. The senseless

and rude toy will be thrown aside for the inimitable and resplendent living object in the insect and the flower. They will admire, with an intensity of feeling, the solemn peal of the thunder, or the vivid blaze of the lightning. They will sedulously inquire into the mysteries of nature, with an intenser pleasure than into the passive and ordinary business of the world. Their early and most endeared pursuits will be associated with the external and natural creation. A favorite animal, an elegant bird, or a carefully tended flower, will mark the progressive interest. And these impressions seldom or never fade away. They accompany them through life, and busy memory, in its most vivid colors, reverts to the innocent, natural tastes and studies of their early years. That this is so, I think, is sufficiently apparent to all. I appeal to those who may favor me with their attention, and ask if there are not times and occasions, when the beauty of the natural world is more perceptible and appreciable to them than is ordinary — if there are not moments in their experience which owe their entire pleasure and profit to such sources — when these ever existing objects of beauty may have attracted their attention to an unusual degree. So wonderfully indeed are we constituted, and such a power have we over our characters and feelings, that we may change and direct to any channel the natural current of our dispositions and habits; but nature will oftentimes prevail, and an occasional inclination to her guidance, will acknowledge her supremacy and original power.

It is then a universal display of a taste for the natural world, so perceptible in the child, and gushing out into spontaneous and unbidden admiration in the man, under the most unpropitious circumstances, which explains these otherwise anomalous traits in the human character. Thus it seems apparent that there is an instinctive love for such studies, an original delight in, and admiration for, the great and the good so visible in them, wisely ordered by the Creator, to exist in every human being. From the first dawn of creation, to the present moment, He has visibly written in indelible, living characters, an unfailing and infinite volume of instruction. With the certainty of demonstrative truth, the human mind can trace and read the records of events, which transpired before its own energies were called into action, and discover a similar provision for good in the yet unfolding leaves of Nature's volume, just impressed with His signature. To the child, as to the sage, are they instructive and inspiring, and none are too ignorant

or too wise not to be benefited by them. Angels, for aught we know, with keener perceptions, have read and admired ; while, in commemoration of such wisdom, the "morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy."

But this view of the subject is not sufficiently considered. It is this neglect and indifference which exist in our systems of education, which I deem so censurable. We have forgotten the natural disposition of the infant mind and its instinctive perception of the good and the beautiful ; and also the consequent advantages of an attention to such studies as will strengthen and mature it. Prejudice, custom, and erroneous impressions of their utility, have all acted in unison to produce such mistakes. The highway to education has been so often changed, and new routes surveyed, that the delightful by-paths which lead us to the same destination, have been suffered to be overgrown and forgotten. It would be well to re-open some of these avenues, even if at the expense of celerity and despatch, and stop to gather a flower, here and there, by the wayside.

I have observed that to the young the study of nature is peculiarly interesting and inviting. This, I think, must be apparent to every person of reflection. I have attempted to explain the phenomenon on the ground of an instinct wisely implanted in every human breast. I know not that I have ever met with a child whose interest could not be awakened to such subjects to a great, if not to a much greater degree than towards the works of art or objects of other curiosity. Experience has shown, and will daily show, that to the most rude and illiterate, as to the more highly cultivated young mind, the subjects of study in nature, are equally all-absorbing. Instances, of course, there are and must be, where a greater or more intense interest is early manifested, and will prevail over every circumstance, which may be justly called the out-breakings of genius, such as we see in the great master-spirits of every branch of human intellect ; but these are few and rare, compared to the instances of universal taste. We have then a mighty engine for effectual good put into our hands. The outward world, the vast creation, furnish the means and lessons, while we are the ministers to dispense them. Lessons of wisdom, instances of consummate skill, laws undeviatingly profound, principles grand as beautiful, results wonderful as simple, appeals to the heart forcible as tender, demands on the intellect imperious as exalting, facili-



ties to the expansion of mind, attainable as curiously contrived, are before us. The first, almost inaudible voice of religion to the young heart, may be announced in whisperings of instructive beauty; and the last profound instance of respect and awe, of fear and love for the orderings and ways of Providence, produced by such studies.

I believe that Bacon somewhere expresses a sentiment similar to this, that "the philosopher must enter the kingdom of nature as the christian does the kingdom of heaven, in the capacity of a little child;" thus apt to learn and ready to receive each demonstration of truth. Not less profound the remark, nor more honorable to his character, the last sentiment of Newton, after his long and glorious career of illustrious studies, that he seemed to himself "as a child playing on the sea-shore, while the immense ocean of truth lay unexplored before him."

Whence then the cause of the reverse of this; and why so few comparatively, who are in pursuit of the truths of nature? The anomaly is easily explained. One cause is the prevalent mistake among parents and in all classes of society, respecting the utility of such studies. The natural love for the beautiful, and the grand, and even the first instinctive teachings of nature are extinguished and deadened as soon as awakened; or on the other hand, the precious moment and opportunity of improvement is neglected. Instead of reading lessons of design, or perceiving instances of wisdom in the different objects around, the child is too often taught to regard them with abhorrence and disgust. Mistaken notions of parental love unconsciously destroy the delicate and now forming tissue of this one kind of moral and intellectual means of developing the character. In the netted wings of the butterfly, which flutters before the delighted child, it is not taught many a lesson of Supreme Intelligence. It sees in the wonderful insect, a contemptible, but a gaudy being, the sole object of its sport or cruelty. The tender and nicer sensibilities of its pure nature are prematurely crushed, and it may require long and tedious efforts in after life to raise them again. In the deep and grand music of the thunder, or in the gorgeous piles of clouds, which accompany the tempest, the child is erroneously led to suppose a connexion with evil and danger. These erroneous lessons may accompany it through life, and because so early given, as to escape memory, such impressions are supposed to proceed from instinct. The phenomena of na-



ture have been stricken from its book of instruction, and the few simple truths, which it unconsciously receives, perverted. Parental responsibility and duty have much to do here. Nor is this an unimportant point. On the other hand, it is worthy of deep consideration. As civil guardians of the young, in the station of public instructors, it especially becomes those engaged in education, that more correct and just views be cherished and promulgated. I urge it on your attention for I am persuaded of its vast importance.

There is a beautiful anecdote connected with the early life of Audubon, which he gives us in his brief account of himself, which is much to my purpose. "When I had hardly yet learned to walk, and to articulate those first words, always so endearing to parents, the productions of nature that lay spread all around were constantly pointed out to me. They soon became my playmates; and before my ideas were sufficiently formed to enable me to estimate the difference between the azure tints of the sky, and the emerald hue of the bright foliage, I felt that an intimacy with them not consisting of friendship merely, but bordering on phrenzy, must accompany me through life — and now more than ever am I persuaded of the power of these early impressions. My father generally accompanied my steps, procured birds and flowers for me, with great eagerness, pointed out the elegant movements of the former, and splendid attire of the latter. My valued preceptor would then speak of the departure and return of birds with the seasons, and would describe their haunts; and more wonderful than all their change of livery; thus exciting me to study them and to raise my mind towards their great Creator." We may conceive that the genius and talent of this distinguished countryman of ours, so happily employed on a splendid branch of our natural history, was in no humble degree cherished and encouraged by the penetration and sagacity of the father; and that he laid, as it were, the corner-stone of the future fame of the son.

Another reason of such neglect, may be traced to our schools. The study of natural history in schools does not exist in very many, and is but a name in most. Unlike the modes of instruction in some parts of Europe, our public and common schools exclude it entirely from their processes of education. The obvious cause is the mistake so prevalent in the community of its inutility. It is regarded as an accomplishment, like the study of the fine arts, too inapplicable

to the plainer and sterner routine of ordinary study. The system of utility and selfish views of immediate, practical good, come into action. The future apprentice to the ingenious mechanic, for instance, receives his public instruction in the merest rudiments of knowledge. He goes to his trade or business with a tolerable proficiency in the simpler branches of an English education. The grand prototypes of his craft and vocation, in the inimitable workmanship of nature, are unknown to him. Unless his perceptions are keener than ordinary, or his intuitive genius cannot be constrained by even an inferior education, he will but passively and laboriously have followed in the well beaten track of mere imitation. For the great discoveries in his line of business, he is, and must be indebted to the few, who are more enlightened. Now what science has already effected in the arts, is stupendous : but what great discoveries it may cause, when a wider and more combined attention to the numerous branches of its investigations, shall be instituted, we can only faintly imagine from its past results : discoveries, too, not confined to the economical operations of matter, but in the higher, more exalting powers of moral and intellectual good.

Nearly the same remark which has been made on common schools may be applied to private institutions of education. The attention paid to natural history is limited, not even so much as to the rudimentary instruction in natural philosophy. Pupils of such schools will possess a better knowledge of the latter than of the former. The reason of this I apprehend is mainly owing, not so much to a prevailing idea of the greater importance of the one than of the other, but to greater facilities in the mode of instruction. The orrery, the telescope, some of the simpler instruments of mathematics, the brilliant experiments of the laboratory, furnished to the scholar, introduce him to tangible and engaging objects. But natural history on the other hand, has little of this character to captivate the attention. A few simple instruments are all the apparatus attached to its study. From this circumstance, and a too great want of proper elementary books, and a greater want of proper instructors, the entrance to its delightful domains is rendered disagreeable. The student is disgusted with its technicalities before his zeal is awakened to its curious facts. He attempts to study its theory, and its theory is considered the end and aim of pursuit. Or else he is led to the mere portal of its temple, and the catalogue committed to him,

and then is he bid to range its vast cabinets, with no friendly voice to encourage, and no kindly aid to point out its objects of thrilling interest. He is not led to connect the good and the beautiful, the wise and the excellent with every minutia of his study, and turns from the pursuit as unworthy his time and talents. The glories of the visible creation are no longer resplendent to his natural eye, and one of the greatest means of instruction given by his Creator is wasted and neglected.

I think that I do not overstate the fact when I make these assertions. Let me ask, is not this too much the case? Else why with so many facilities to its study, which most of our schools profess to possess, is there so little practical knowledge observable.

Take for example the single branch of Botany, by far the most attractive, elegant and precise, so well adapted to the refinement of a female education; and the subjects of its study so universally admired. As pursued in our schools it is generally a task. The pupils commit to memory page after page of some text book, so as to be able to tell the correct term for each organ of a plant without a single idea of its general economy. A specimen is soon put into their hands, and after being able to count the number of stamens, to determine without much hesitation the size and form of the leaves, and by much trouble to discover through the manual the name — the mighty work is done. Pupil is now as wise as instructor — their labors and investigations must cease.

Of the other branches of study still less is taught. The most erroneous notions of the insect world, are strengthened by an inattention to an early interest in its economy. A few facts with much error are gathered in our childhood from our picture-books and primers; and instead of improvement and sources of profound instruction, these astonishing instances of creative energy are rendered unavailing. So what is taught of mineralogy, the most attractive and splendid branch of geology; or of geology itself, with its brilliant discoveries into the history of the earth; or of conchology, connected as it is with zoological pursuits? Of comparative anatomy and of physiological studies, how little is known! Education has so far deviated from its true course, as to have forgotten, in its sedulousness for the expansion of the mind, the primary, all important care of the physical structure. The consequences have been therefore natural and alarming; and to the patron of education, the subject of introducing juster conceptions of



its true object, and also of arriving at the best mode for its promotion must be of interest. To this neglect we may attribute much of the prevailing tendency to dissipation and immorality in the community. The great duties which religion has laid down, are evidently founded on the first principles of our very natures and physical organization, and where these are observed, through a proper dissemination of knowledge, there will also be perceived the most willing obedience to them. With just ideas of the value of the study of nature early impressed on the mind, the passions will seldom get the better of the reason, while such constant sources of pleasure, refined and delicate, are opened before it. If we for a moment reflect who are the idle, the dissipated, the immoral, we shall not find them among those men whose path of life, science has illumed: we cannot trace them to the philosophers, the naturalists, the scientific. Neither shall we see them among the more laborious occupations of life, where those occupations are enlivened by occasional glimpses at other and the fascinating studies of nature. Literature even does not save its disciples from many of the dissolute habits of society. The avocations of the busy world need moments of relaxation and amusement, and where a purer resource is not attainable, a grosser will be resorted to. We have at command the most facile means to obviate this, and to check the onward progress of immorality. Let the glories of creation as of old, now be assiduously the subjects for more reflection. Among other important means let the investigations of natural science be made an effectual engine in the cause of good. Let us revert to the simplicity of primitive days, and derive instruction as well as pleasure, profit as well as relaxation from such sources. Let the philanthropist and the patron of education consider the matter, that a moral and intellectual reform, simultaneous and effective may be produced.

I adverted to the state of the natural sciences in our schools. A word more on that point. Primary instruction is probably the most difficult subject which taxes the ingenuity of the mind. To convey proper conceptions for the first time, to lay the foundation of knowledge, is a task as arduous as it is noble. The improvements which have been introduced into most of the branches of common education, evince a laudable and earnest interest in its behalf. But while the instructor is enabled to avail himself of so many advantages in the



instruction of his pupils, he finds an attempt to introduce studies other than ordinary, to be great and difficult. The text-books of natural history, where there are any, are peculiarly defective. A pursuit consisting so much in practical observation and individual interest, is erroneously supposed communicable by rules and formulas. The instructor must lay aside all technical formality, if he would be successful. He must dispense with the book, and resort to his own mind for truths. He must interest the scholar by facts, and not presume to draw the attention by abstract propositions. He is not to be content with a well recited lesson, or a close attention to a lecture; nor allow his pupils to think that when his course of instruction is completed, that he has otherwise than just opened the way before them to an illimitable field of beauty and wisdom. Let him interest the first steps to tread that field, and his work may be done, yet only because their own has been properly commenced.

It is at once perceptible, that I have presumed on the fact that the instructor is himself instructed, an adept, or at least, an untiring and zealous student. Without a floral gem of spring, a fresh flower of summer, he will find in the vegetable world sufficient subjects for his instructive employment. Without much of the complex apparatus of natural philosophy, and with a simple instrument or two, he can introduce the delighted pupil to the mysteries of organic life. His pupil will soon care less for the precision of science in his deep admiration of the hidden wonders of his physiological studies. The microscope will reveal to him worlds of life and exquisite symmetry, of which before he had not the faintest conception. It will unfold the nice and delicate economy of matter in plant and animal. He will see more in the crystalline globule of yet forming tissue, and in the development of the incipient germ, than hours of intense study could unveil to him. He would perceive with delighted eye and swelling heart and grateful mind, those objects of consummate skill and wisdom, which, though ever existent, were hidden from his view. Tell him not of the pleasures of the world and the guilty, misnamed delights of vice and folly, while he is so keenly alive to objects never failing, and always satisfactory. You will find it difficult to divert his attention from duty by offering such incitements for amusement, while his own course brings a higher satisfaction, combined with instruction.

I observed that the text books of natural history are greatly defective. Indeed, I know not how they could be otherwise. We can only expect to create a taste, and if we succeed in that, the first and important step is gained. To do this, the most interesting portions of natural science should be used as familiar lessons in reading, and these adapted to different ages, the more especially to the quite young. Every thing which borders on fiction should be sedulously excluded; while the impression that each fact obtained is the attainment of an important TRUTH, should be constantly urged. Nature is true to itself, and to its Great Author. It addresses the single-hearted and the pure. It recoils with instinctive sensitiveness from duplicity, and practises no fraud on the imagination. We should guard against admitting any thing fictitious with which natural history has been heretofore connected; while the plain and curious, the remarkable and beautiful, should be unfolded to view.

Perhaps the most prominent defect in the little attention which is paid to the study of natural history in our schools, and a defect indeed in all the books of amusement intended for the young, consists in the want of American works. Republications from abroad, with scarcely an alteration, except in the title-page, are put into their hands. They receive impressions of the general economy of nature as seen by them at home, but which in fact belong to similar subjects abroad. We need selections from the writings of our own naturalists, and works from our own scientific men. We want an American "Library of Entertaining Knowledge," the "Journal of a Naturalist," of our own and national text books on the subject. We have been too much indebted to the science of other countries for illustration. We wish to make our youth lovers of their native flowers, and interested in native and home-born science, and proud of every distinguishing feature of their native land. We have objects in nature grand, sublime and curious, as well as subjects in history glorious and remarkable, to inspire patriotism for intellectual as for civil privileges. The press is therefore to be watched with a discriminating eye, that the fountain of unintentional error, be not suffered to flow and become effective; while a wider and more extensive patronage should be generously offered to works characteristically and peculiarly national, be they the first lessons of infancy, or the researches of patient and long study.

But to deeply interest the young in the study of natural

history, as promotive of good, we must look to the teachers of our holy faith, who are in an especial manner their guardians and instructors. I speak with due deference to those great subjects, when I say that we are to expect important results from their interest in those views of religion and duty, which are presented by them through the means which the natural sciences afford. If we are to impart truth to the infant mind, and truth too, of the most vital importance, I humbly conceive it should be in that manner, which will make the greatest impression. There is, happily, much in the genius of Christianity, which is easily imparted, such as the character of the Saviour; the moral dignity and virtue which shone in him is peculiarly attractive to the child; still, in no happier way can some of the most exalting attributes of Deity be imparted nor made comprehensive, than through the studies of the natural world. Christianity is thus intimately connected with nature. It thus enables us to see the Creator more plainly in his works, to perceive with the certainty of demonstration his glorious perfections, which, though beaming in living characters from the external world for ages, were but half seen and understood. To guard the young from the frightful errors of scepticism and atheism, where could they look for greater aid? “Naturalem enim philosophiam post verbum Dei, certissimam superstitionis medicinam, eandem probatissimum fidei alimentum esse. Itaque merito religioni, tanquam fidissimam et acceptissimam ancillam attribui, cum altera voluntatem Dei, altera postestatem manifestat. Neque errasse eum, qui dixit, “erratis nescientes scripturas et potestatem Dei,” informationem de voluntate et meditationem de potestate, nexu individuo copulantem.” (*Opusc. Philosoph. de Interpret. Naturæ.*) The principles as well as the very foundation of our common faith have already found in the promoters of the physical sciences, some of their mightiest and most effective champions. The star-lit science, which guided the steps of Newton for a long course of years, was rendered doubly effulgent by his later studies into the sacred text of scripture. In Priestley, the philosopher and sage, we behold the ardent and sincere Christian. In Paley, the lover of nature, an equal admiration for revelation, so intimately connected with it. In the gigantic mind of Cuvier—the simple and analytical process to overthrow the infidelity of perverted science; and in a host of worthy men too numer-

ous for detail — wisdom and goodness simultaneously developed and expanded by the influence of a love of nature.

In conclusion, I can do no better than by presenting you with the judicious and sound remarks of a late writer in allusion to this particular point of the subject before us. “Teach then your interesting charge, the nature and the solidity of that foundation on which all your hopes rest:— show them that you have not followed “cunningly devised fables,”— that your faith is not an hereditary prejudice, nor your hope a fond delusion. Teach them not only that there is, but why you have the undoubted assurance that there is, a supreme and glorious Creator, who is both the benefactor and judge of man: show them how his name is written on every plant, and shines in every sunbeam — let them see in all the wonders of science, in all the course of nature, in all the curious arrangements and exquisite adaptations which the structure of plants and animals exhibit, the wisdom, power and goodness of the Great Parent of mankind. Accustom them early to follow “nature up to nature’s God,” and thus while they acquire a taste for some of the purest of earthly pleasures, they will be prepared to find the whole creation a most interesting volume of sacred theology.”\*

Friends of education! in treating the subject assigned to me, I have endeavored to lay great stress on those views which seemed to me of particular value in the instruction of the young. I deem it a self-evident fact, that the pursuit of the natural sciences is promotive of intellectual and moral dignity. This glorious fabric of creation were made in vain, were its several components, so exquisitely ordered and designed, but an outward and only necessary accompaniment to its existence. No, it had higher purposes and wiser ends to promote; the finger of Deity is, as it has ever been, writing for the instruction and improvement of the human mind through its instrumentality, lessons of unfailing light and love and truth.

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\* Lectures on the Atheistic Controversy. By Rev. B. Godwin. Lect. VI.





# LECTURE IV.

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ON THE  
COMPARATIVE MERITS  
OF  
PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

By THEODORE EDSON.



## ON PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

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THE subject with which I have been honored by the Institute, on this occasion, is "The Comparative Merits of Private and Public Schools."

Public schools are those by law established among us, the common free schools of New England, such as we actually observe them, scattered through the towns and villages of our own Commonwealth, like stars in the heavenly constellations. Or, rather, such as they were in the grand conception of our fathers, such as they were designed to be, as the institution admits of their being made, such as they may be, and as they will, I trust, ere long, generally become.

Over these the law provides for each town a superintending committee, having general charge of all the town schools, empowered to prescribe the books and direct the exercises. In the cities and some of the larger towns this committee supersedes the district prudential committee, and is entrusted with the duties of employing, paying, and, if need be, of removing the teachers.

The term public school may be applied to all such academies, seminaries and colleges, as are subject to the supervision of a continuous responsible board.

By private schools, I understand the case where a certain number of families agree together, and employ a teacher to instruct such pupils as they may send to his school, and to admit no others. Also, where a teacher sets up for himself, provides his room and accommodations, and opens his door as he may judge proper to those who apply.



An obvious feature of distinction between public and private schools, as I have now classed them, is that the former are under the supervision of selected men, responsible more or less directly to the community. The private schools have no supervision, or only that of the parents.

An advantage of the private school system is that, when the persons associated are sufficiently wealthy and agreed, they can, if so disposed, hold out inducements for the most accomplished teachers. This advantage is of course more frequently realized in regard to male than female teachers. Men of very finished education and of the best promise, both as to knowledge of the science, and skill in the art of teaching, have disposed of their labors in this line of engagement. The very best teachers are a precious commodity among us, and ought to receive, and can command, a price, which the patrons of public schools are not warranted to give. The few such men, who devote themselves to the profession of teaching, can turn their talents to greater pecuniary profit in private schools, and these, being what they make them, are mostly schools of a very high order. Happy the pupils who are favored with such teaching, and it may be considered one of the greatest blessings of wealth to be able to procure it.

These, however, comprise but a very small proportion of our private schools. Though it be an advantage of the system that it admits of such, yet, it actually produces but very few. For private schools are often resorted to by those who have no disposition to pay the highest price for instruction. And it is believed that they do not give on an average so high wages as are paid in public schools. The families uniting together for a private school, may have, among themselves, some one to whom they wish to give respectable employment, who has nothing to do but to keep school, and is ready to engage, though the wages be small. A young lady, favorably known to the parents, the cousin, relative or friend of some, and acquaintance of all, liked of the children, keeps to the satisfaction of her employers. The objects they had in view are accomplished, though at the same time it may be that neither she nor they have had a single thought on the subject of teaching.

One of the greatest difficulties, whether in public or private schools, is that of securing competent teachers. There is no difficulty in finding persons willing to engage in this service, and persons who have studied the branches proposed to be

taught. But, for want of a more systematic preparation of teachers, many offer themselves for the work, who have no knowledge of teaching, as a science, nor any expertness in it as an art. Some have no idea that there is any science about it, except that of the branch of learning to be taught, and suppose the art to be only some vague, inexplicable, unimaginable gift, unattainable to such as have it not, with which they fancy themselves endowed. While so many of this description are constantly offering their services and produce their recommendations, it is not always easy to secure the qualified teachers. The applicant wants employment. He is deserving. To doubt his knowledge of the branches proposed to be taught would be an insult. He has friends, who, with as little idea as himself of any teaching qualifications, yet feel the influence of many considerations in favor of his being employed. They know him to be a good man, a christian, perhaps, and, perhaps too, of their own belief and denomination. He is on the right side in politics, one who would favor such and such objects in the community which they feel it to be their interest to promote. It were endless, indeed, to enumerate all the considerations, which, whether openly urged or not, do actually go to enhance the claims of the applicant. These irrelevant considerations, operating on the minds of the employers, as disturbing forces, create the difficulty of securing real teachers. The less they are felt the better. It is believed that the arrangement, best adapted to obviate these adverse influences, is that which our public school system admits of, and which is in fact adopted in many places, where the superintending committee is charged with the duty of employing the teachers, themselves responsible continually to the whole people for a faithful discharge of their trust. Such is the statute of the Commonwealth, that the inhabitants of every town may, if they think it expedient, carry into effect its provisions, without the sub-division of districts, by putting the entire management of the schools into the hands of the superintending committee. The advantages resulting therefrom are found, upon experience, to be many and important. It gives energy and effect to the superintendency, difficult to be sustained on the district system. No business can be efficiently conducted, unless the party who superintends and is responsible for the results, is also empowered to select and employ those who execute. The effect of separating this duty from that of supervision, is like that

which would have followed the execution of king Solomon's judgment respecting the disputed child. To divide this responsibility is to destroy it. A door is also opened for the admission of differences of views and of feelings between the two committees, which must paralyze the efforts of one, or the other, or both. I cannot but think that vesting the power of superintending our schools in one body, and that of selecting the teachers in another, is an error which has done much to enfeeble the operation of our public school system, and to keep back the cause of common education. The duty of selecting teachers should be not in the hands of the parents directly, because they are most exposed to the action of disturbing and irrelevant influences upon their feelings, and, therefore, not likely to make the best choice, but in the hands of a selected body, responsible to the parents. Such, indeed, is the prudential committee in the district. But the general committee residing (partly in, but) chiefly out of the district, are still less liable to be influenced by the local questions and feelings within, and, if competent to superintend, are, of the two, the body more likely to be qualified to select the teachers.

Those institutions, which are beginning to spring up among us, for the education and qualification of teachers, deserve encouragement from those who wish well to public schools. The qualifications for teaching are specific and peculiar, for which distinct preparation, an appropriate study, is as requisite as for any other profession. Besides the sciences taught in common schools, there is the science of teaching, which hath its rudiments and its art; the distinctive elements of which should be carefully studied, and well understood, by every teacher. Let all the friends of education hail the development and progress of this science, and welcome the teacher's teacher, to the highest walks of useful and honorable labor.

There should be, however, a *public institution* of the kind upon a large scale, and spiritedly conducted. It is a part of our public school system, essential to its full and perfect operation. Why should not the school fund of the State be applied to this purpose! Divided as it now is among towns amply able to pay for their own schools, and whose schools are all the better for their paying for, it becomes exceedingly questionable, whether on the whole, the money so expended, is likely to forward the cause of common school education. Might not the money, with far more advantage, be applied to



the proper completion of our school system, by providing a suitable State seminary for the preparation of teachers? Let the institution have a spirited supervision, and be authorized to give certificates of qualification to those whom they send forth. Let these certificates be of several, different, established and known forms, and be given according to the degree of qualification and proficiency which each may be known to have made. Such a seminary, thus endowed, and efficiently conducted, would give system (just what is wanted) to our common schools; system, which the mighty influences made to bear thereon, would be constantly pressing onward toward the highest point of attainable perfection. The committee who might choose to employ a teacher from the seminary, would then have the best means of judging of his qualifications. Should they prefer to employ others, it would be only taking greater risk upon themselves, for which they would be answerable to the community.

Taking things, however, as they now are, we believe, that, with the exception of the very few private schools of the highest order, the public schools are likely to secure the better class of teachers.

A school superintended by the parents of the pupils as such, is under the worst kind of supervision, as every experienced teacher well knows. A committee of these same persons who, besides parental fondness, might be made to feel a responsibility to the rest, who appointed them, would, as a committee, direct and act differently from what themselves would as parents only. And the difference, I need not add, would be favorable to the interests of the school.

A contemplated advantage to our public schools from the superintendence of a vigorous and intelligent committee is, that they, having direction of the books and studies, may put the exercises of the school into such regular system, that a change of teachers shall not very sensibly affect the course of instruction. Great and frequent changes herein are attended with much evil and inconvenience. In the private school, the books, exercises and studies, are regulated by the teacher, as best he may. He sets up for himself, collects a few pupils from various quarters. They must have some books, and he selects from the multitude, with which the market teems, such as he may like best. He finds his pupils, in the same branches, have studied many different books, and are of different standing, in the various branches. So that to bring



them together and have them finally well classed, he thinks it best to put them very far back, even to the rudiments in each branch of study. He continues his school, perhaps, two, three, or four months. Receives not quite so much encouragement as he expected, and gives it up. The pupils disperse, and he takes up some other business, or finds some other place. At length another undertakes — picks up some of the same children, and some more — adopts his own books, classes the pupils anew, takes care to put them far enough back; and, with his own peculiar method, or with no method, begins again, pursues the project, and drops it for something else; and so the process goes on. A boy is taken from the public schools and sent to the private with the idea that, since it is expensive and select, there must be some great advantage to be gained. After an absence of four or five months, he returns to his former school, and is found, not only incapable of entering the class he left, but scarcely able to get on with the class of the same standing as that was when he left it. Not but that he has studied some, and learned some, but he is harassed and impeded by capricious changes of books and exercises, and the falling back consequent upon new classifications.

He who sets up a private school must look out first for pupils, without which he has neither school nor compensation. To obtain these, he must catch the favor of parents. In regard to most of the commodities of life, men may be supposed to be judges of the article they have occasion to purchase. Schools, however, would seem to present a singular exception. For one needs but a slight observation of school advertisements to be convinced, that what is most taking with parents, who are disposed to patronise private schools, is the showy and the superficial. Hence the prospectus of a private school usually exhibits more departments and branches of learning, than are taught in our most extensive universities. And the absurd length to which it is drawn, is not commonly in accordance with the better judgment of the teacher, but to suit the taste of his patrons. And the evil ends not with the advertisement. The parent, that he may get his penny-worth, expects his child to be taught a little of every thing. The teacher must make his promise good. He must not seem reluctant to undertake what he engaged to do, and he patiently allows the studies to be multiplied, till he would be getting rich indeed, had he as many pupils as there are depart-

ments of instruction on his hands. Perhaps he plainly sees the fallacy of pretending to teach so much : but then it makes his school show off, and the parents are pleased with it, and that is his bread. And at length, it may be, his own better judgment succumbs to the prevailing taste of those who pay him.

No better remedy can be devised for these evils, than that provided by our common school system, where the entire direction of the studies and exercises is put into the hands of a committee, acting under a sense of responsibility, and which should consist of the most intelligent and best qualified of the community. Reflecting men, acting for the public, are in a situation favorable to improve themselves, and to make improvements. Hence the fact that we find a far greater simplicity in the system of studies and instruction, consequently less show, and more efficiency, in the public, than in the private schools of the same degree of standing.

It has been observed by those who have had considerable acquaintance with our common schools, that, in proportion as a teacher understands teaching, he inclines to simplicity of method, and is content to make thorough work of whatever he has occasion to teach. On the other hand, just according as one is deficient in ability to teach, ignorant of the science, and unskilled in the art, his mind is inclined to depend much on books of instruction, is fond of changing them, and prone to multiply the branches of study. He complains of the dullness, the backwardness, and perverseness of his pupils, and is continually looking out for something new to amuse them. The private school is favorable to the indulgence of this shiftless propensity. The public school, being under proper superintendence, unfavorable. Hence it becomes irksome to the incompetent teacher, who naturally resorts to the private school, where, for want of power to keep up the interest of pupils in any study to which he would direct their minds, he can amuse himself and them by a constant succession of new books, new plans, and new subjects of attention.

The simplicity of public school instruction is favorable to the *improvement* of the teacher in the art of teaching. When a young person, male or female, undertakes to keep a school, without any knowledge of the science, the entire want of thought or notion on the subject is betrayed in several ways. You will hear a teacher say, "This reading book we have got almost tired of; we have read it over and over, till the scholars can almost say it by heart: can't we have a new

one?" This is in fact, a plain confession, that he has been hearing the reading lessons with a view to the amusement which the subject matter may afford himself, and the pupils have read for the like purpose. The particular ways and methods of making a poor reader read well, have never been agitated. One clear distinct notion of teaching his pupils to read in the best possible manner, such as where to begin, and why, and how to proceed with each—one deliberate effort of skill, and he never would offer as an objection to the continued use of a reading book, otherwise suitable, that it had become familiar to himself, or to his pupils. Let him but know the difference between reading and learning to read, and let him bend his mind to the simple business of teaching it, and you would hear no complaint of the book till he should be able to say, "they can now read this *perfectly*, or *sufficiently well*."

The entire lack of any notion or thought about teaching is betrayed, when, at an examination, the instructor takes it for granted, that you wish to hear only the best classes, and these only in the highest branches. It is on the supposition that your chief interest can be only in the subject matter of the lessons; because he supposes that to be the most worthy subject of his attention. He has no idea that you wish to observe the skill and success with which he teaches, and that this may be observed in a very few examples of exercise, and is observable in the lower branches, as well as in the higher. How many propose to take schools, into whose minds not a single ray of the science of teaching has ever penetrated! Not only does the private school system, by the multiplicity of studies allowable therein, and by the facility afforded of flattering the pride, and of humoring the weakness and prejudices of parents, give encouragement to this sort of teachers, but, (that to which I have been bringing your attention) the public school, by the simplicity of its course of instruction, and the absence of topics likely to divert the mind, is more favorable to the enlightening of a deficient teacher. While there is less to misdirect the mind, there is more to suggest the true points of inquiry. Employed to teach a limited number of lessons to a succession of pupils, when these lessons, so simple, have become so familiar as to lose all their interest *per se*, he will then either throw up his employment as too irksome, or, feeling after something more, his mind will enter within the veil, and explore the interesting regions of the teaching science, and bringing forth principles, and apply-



ing them to the plastic minds of his pupils, in these simple exercises, he will find scope for the most vigorous intellectual energies, — an engagement as deeply interesting as it is highly useful and honorable.

To the institution of public schools as a whole, we may look for the chief impulse in the improvement of our enlightened teachers, as well as the enlightening of the incompetent. And as I hail the onward cause of education, freighted with human weal, and riding in upon the flood-tide of light and intelligence, mine eye is chiefly directed to the same quarter for the power which is to propel her forward in her course of prosperity and improvement.

From these few remarks respecting the teachers, we will turn our attention more to the pupils. Let us look into the schools themselves, and observe the comparative merits of each as the same may appear in some of their most obvious features.

Private schools have an advantage of being select, especially when the parents employ the teacher upon a salary, and keep the management in their own hands. We will suppose that those who are agreeable to each other, and who wish their children to associate together, unite as the exclusive supporters of the school; that the pupils have had uncommon pains taken with them at home, have been kept from vulgar intimacies, and appear better behaved than the generality of children. It is thought to be safer to keep them at a select school, where they mingle only with children of the better sort, like themselves. And parents find their account in it. Were their children thrown into a large, promiscuous, free school, open alike to the rich and the poor, they would be there exposed to the liability of forming undesirable acquaintances, of falling under a greater variety of influences, especially from those of low-bred and vulgar habits; and, if left to amalgamate with whomsoever they might come in contact, there is danger that their manners may deteriorate, and, perhaps, their morals become polluted. It is but too common to observe the sad fact, that masses of children or of men, brought promiscuously and intimately together, do frequently develope, by their very contact, roughness of manner, and corruption of principle. Under such circumstances, nothing but the strictest scrutiny, and unwearied care, will prevent the thorns and briars, aye, the deadly nightshade, from springing up and luxuriating in the human character. The



principal advantage of select, private schools, over the free and public, is that there may be in them less exposure to the taint of ill-manners and vicious habits.

But these are a favorable description of private schools, of the like of which there actually are, comparatively, but very few. In general it is impracticable to keep out ill-manners or corrupting influences from private schools. Few are so far under the control of the parents as to give them the option of excluding whom they would. Most of them are set up by the teacher, with only a sort of general patronage of a few families, with liberty to admit such as may apply.

The principles on which pupils are selected for the private school, are commonly such as are not likely to secure a selection favorable to a good influence. They are not unfrequently children, respecting whose early training the greatest errors have been committed, whose parents are without breeding themselves, bearish, ambitious, overreaching, able to pay, and determined that other children shall not be esteemed better than theirs. An idle, rude and vicious boy, who has learned all the tricks practised in the public school, who is always in trouble with his teacher, and whose parents have given up the expectation of his getting any good where he is, is sent to the private school with a sort of vague hope, that he may there be transmuted into a gentleman and a scholar. The small private schools become just the places to catch all this sort of material, the very class of pupils, whose influence upon their companions is the most pestilential. Such private schools may be called select, but the selection is of the wrong side for a favorable influence, either on the manners or the morals.

Our common free schools however, claim not the advantages of being select. But, since they do hold out some obvious and important advantages, the question becomes an interesting one, whether the careful parent, who regards the morals and the manners of his child, can devise any way of mitigating the evil of early coming in contact with that little world, a public school.

Our children, born into the world, are designed by God to serve their generation such as it is. Not the world of past ages, with which history acquaints us; nor the world of imagination, to which we are introduced in works of fiction and of fancy, but the world as it acts, and errs, and is influenced, around them. Education, in its broad extent, is more than the committing of arbitrary signs to the memory. It is the

forming of the man, and the fitting of him for the sphere to which God hath designated him. And since our children are sent into the world to do good to the great community of man such as they find it, let them learn the language of men; let them learn the sciences most used and called for among men; and let them be educated also in the actual knowledge and observation of men. And, as they *early* study the science of books, should they not *early* begin the great study of mankind? Would you not have them study the sciences of nature as she is manifested around us? Should they be taught the science of plants from book alone! Would you not bid them explore the fair fields when clothed in their verdure, and take them to the blooming gardens? Should they not study the science of the earth as well from her mountains, her plains, her mines, and her quarries, as from books? And should these studies be commenced while they have the advantage of a teacher, or must they be withheld from the page of nature, till they have past their pupilage? And if the knowledge of man is best acquired, not from books alone, but also by an extensive observation of the varieties which go to make up the whole community, *when* should this study be begun? While under the guidance of the careful parent, and with the assistance of a faithful teacher? Or, is it best, during the most favorable period for education, and so long as the pupil is subject to the needful direction of parent and teacher, to withdraw him as much as possible from a general acquaintance with his species, from seeing human nature in any variety of samples? The select school is on the principle of secluding the pupils from an extensive observation of any considerable variety of characters. Is this, on the whole, judicious? It is indeed true, that the knowledge of the world is but the knowledge of *good* and *evil*. And if children were in a situation *never* to know the evil of the world it would be worth while to seclude them. But it is not so. The world is their sphere, upon which they *must* enter, earlier or later. And the question seems to be, shall they begin the study of it *early* and *gradually*, with those of their own age, who are growing up with them, and are to be their fellow travellers in the journey of life, while they have the benefit of teachers, and while parents have the parental power over them? Or, shall they, for greater security, or relieving parents of labor, be withdrawn from all opportunity to acquire this proper and important knowledge of man, till they emerge from parental

control ; and, when they are of an age at which the world can be kept from them no longer, shall they be plunged abruptly into scenes to which they are habitually unsuited, and, in regard to which, they are in fact, uneducated.

There are two points, at least, of practical education, in which they should be well trained, before the time arrives, when they must be turned entirely adrift in the world. The first, *how* to exert a good influence, even the best they can, upon others. The second, how to avoid the evil effect of a bad influence from others. How to do the most good to those around them, and how best to avoid the harm others might do to them. Since our children *must*, at some period, if they live, come in contact with the world, should they not be taught, when they see evil, not to be contaminated by it ; when they see vulgarity, not to adopt it ; when they witness ill manners, to disapprove and avoid the like ; to know temptations, and to resist them. Such is the education which God provides for us all. Surrounding evil and temptation is the discipline of that school in which he is educating us. And doth not his Providence clearly suggest the mode for us to follow with our children ? that of bringing them while young, and for the purpose of training, into prudent contact with the young world ? to acquaint them early with their cotemporaries ? While, in their pupilage, when the teacher may teach them to do the good and to avoid the evil, while the parents have their full share in forming the manners, when children are most susceptible of the salutary influence of the domestic circle, and are brought from day to day, under the careful inspection of parental solicitude, does not the public school present, on the whole, a favorable opportunity for securing their training in one of the main branches of education ? How practicable it is, and to faithful and enlightened parents how delightful, when the boy is sent forth on his little excursions for learning the world in a promiscuous school, to teach how the good is to be distinguished and followed, and how the bad is to be detected and shunned ; to bring all the strength of home influence into competition with bad example ; to advise, to warn, to correct, at the precise time when it is needful. How interesting to parental fondness to observe the development of a discriminating judgment and a tender conscience, the strengthening of tested principle, the growth of ingenuous virtue under trial and temptation ! Where pains are taken to perform these duties faith-



fully, they will be more or less successful in preserving the manners and morals of children in the public school, and parents will reap the richest rewards of satisfaction on having discharged with fidelity the office which the God of nature and of men hath assigned them.

But the question may be asked — “What is the actual effect of this careful training of the child, in the public school, upon his manners? Will you, after all, produce the same style of manners, which education, in a more select sphere, might have secured?” Perhaps not precisely the same.

And here permit me to ask — do not parents sometimes err in their estimate of good manners? In their anxiety to keep their children from the contamination of vulgar companions, do they not so urge their prohibitions, and compass them with such circumstances, as to give the impression distinctly that other children are essentially and necessarily inferior to themselves; that there is a difference, which no efforts, or training, or conduct, can obviate. This impression, studiously inculcated on the tender mind, for the sake of rearing a barrier of separation as a safeguard to the manners of their children, has an obvious influence upon their behaviour. It is likely to mark their manners with peculiarity. Perhaps the self-consequence, so sedulously, and withal so easily, inculcated, may have produced a certain dignity of bearing flattering to the pride of the parents. But is there not at the same time a supercilious and overbearing spirit continually gleaming through that haughtiness of manner, which has come by filling the mind's eye with self; an unkind, ungenteel deportment, which, though it be not vulgar, though it seem to the fond parent to serve his purpose of distinction, is, nevertheless, as unlovely to the considerate, the wise, and the good, as it is injurious to the heart of the possessor? If such dignity be necessary to genteel deportment, then may we set to work to make our children more selfish that they may be more exclusive beings. The bold and easy impudence resulting from overweening notions of self, and the air put on to make others feel a sense of inferiority, we think need not, and should not be incorporated into the manners as a necessary part of good breeding. May not the parent carry his notions of distinction so far as to misapprehend the quality of manners which his child exhibits? The true gentility is the result of kindness of heart, extensive knowledge of the world, and great care as to the minute matters of deportment. The



foundation must commonly be laid by the parents themselves, and may be cultivated by them, successfully, during the child's connexion with the public school.

It is thought by many to be an advantage to have but a small number of pupils in a school ; and it is not uncommon for parents to send to the private school, because, there being so few that attend, they fancy their children must get a greater share of instruction. They seem to forget that direct, personal communication with the pupil, cannot supersede the necessity of study, and that, beyond a certain proportion of the time, the personal attentions of the teacher are but an interruption. When the school is so small that the teacher must wait for the pupils to prepare themselves, the almost sure consequence is a listlessness of the school, and a lassitude in the exercises, unfavorable to intellectual effort and improvement. The strictness of school discipline gives place to a sort of colloquial ease and familiarity, of which, slackness of mind, and carelessness of preparation, are too often the consequences. A large school, if a due supply of teaching be provided, has many and decided advantages. There is more activity and animation ; the order and discipline are more exact ; the exercises are more prompt and sprightly, urging the mind to an habitual readiness. The excitement of numbers gives a perceptible elasticity and vigor to the movements of the school. The public sentiment, in a large school, less liable to be affected by the perversity of a few leading pupils, becomes, under the management of a skilful teacher, a powerful and happy auxiliary to the good training and culture of the whole. I consider it a clear advantage of public schools, that they are usually larger, and less fluctuating, than the private.

In public schools, where the studies and exercises are well regulated, judiciously arranged, and superintended by an intelligent committee, the loose ends and yawning chasms of waste time are worked up ; you get more study out of the pupils, and more instruction out of the teachers ; and the effect is seen in the good order and vivacity of the school, and in the intellectual activity of the pupils. There is in the private school (unless in the hands of a master-spirit) a slackness, and sleepiness, which makes the discipline an entirely different thing from that of the public schools. A teacher may be quite satisfactory in the former, and be found utterly incompetent to the latter.

I might pursue the comparison. But as I have already

occupied too much of your time, I will but add a closing remark.

Common education, a scion planted by our fathers, now that it has become a tree, is found to be deeply rooted in the hearts and affections of the whole community. It is nourished by our dearest privileges, our most sacred rights. Herein it hath a conservative principle of perpetual improvement, to compare with which the private school system has nothing. Under the shadow of this tree the friends of education will rally. The future advances of the science are the fruits, for which it is already in blossom. Common schools are its vigorous branches. Private schools, its fanciful, and oftentimes beautiful excrescences.



LECTURE V.

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ON ELOCUTION.

BY DAVID FOSDICK, JR.



[A few sentences in the following lecture have been before published in an article in one of the Quarterly Journals. It was impossible, without affectation, to avoid a slight repetition, when the subject of the article and the lecture came in contact.]

## ON ELOCUTION.

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THE different orders of beings in our world are distinguished from each other as strongly in their respective powers of communication, as in the extent of their understanding, or the variety, delicacy, and dignity of their feelings. The great Author of existence has beneficently instituted a general correspondence in degree between the capacity of thought and emotion, which he has bestowed upon living creatures and their accompanying capacity of expression. Accordingly, as man stands preeminent above all other inhabitants of the earth in point of intellect and susceptibility, so he greatly excels them all in the diversity of mode, the ease, and the precision with which he can impart the operations of his nature. Most of the brutes utter inarticulate sounds, expressive of pain, pleasure, alarm, &c., which are intelligible to others of the same species; many communicate by signs properly falling under the general term *gesture*; and we are sometimes influenced by certain appearances to believe that they are able to exchange ideas in a manner beyond our knowledge. But how much more exalted is the capacity of expressing conceptions and feelings which is possessed by the human race. Man is radiant with expression. Every feature, every limb, nay, a muscle, a vein, may tell something of the energy within. The brow, smooth or contracted, — the eye, placid, dilated, tearful, flashing, — the lip, calm, quivering, smiling, curled, — the whole countenance, serene, distorted, pale, flushed, — the hand, with its thousand motions, — the chest, still or heaving, — the attitude, relaxed or firm, cowering or lofty, — in short, the visible characteristics of the whole out-

ward man, — are *nature's handwriting*; and the tones of the voice, soft, low, quiet, agitated, broken, shrill, boisterous, are *her oral language*. Consider, moreover, the means of communication with which we have been furnished by art, the wonderful systems of articulate speech, and the method of representing them by writing, and you may then form some conception of that rich magazine of expression which we all possess — a magazine, the abundance of whose precious stores was but poorly tested by the most consummate orator the world ever saw.

The chief means by which man communicates his thoughts and emotions are the *voice*, *gesture*, and *writing*. Under the second of these heads, *gesture*, the expression of the countenance is comprehended, as well as the motions of the limbs and the general attitude.\* *Printing* is only mechanical writing.

The science of ELOCUTION, in my opinion, may most properly be considered as relating to the first two of these three methods of expression, viz. *voice* and *gesture*; although some writers restrict it to speech alone, making gesture a separate topic. In the works of Cicero and Quintilian, elocution relates to the choice and arrangement of words,† and is therefore synonymous with what we term *style*. In the sense which I have affixed to the word it is synonymous with *delivery*. Delivery was usually denominated by the ancients *pronunciation* or *action*.‡ When Demosthenes, on being asked successively what was the first, the second, and the third requisite in an orator, made to each question the same sententious reply in the word *action*, he meant thereby all that is signified by the word *delivery* in our language.

It is my purpose, first to relate with extreme brevity the *fortunes* of this science in different countries and times, so far as we can trace its existence, and then to consider its *importance*, its *true aim*, and finally, the *proper means* of attaining that aim, including under the latter topic observations on errors pertaining to the prevalent method of instruction in the science.

Greece is the first nation of antiquity in which eloquence

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\* "Dicerem etiam de gestu, cum quo junctus est vultus." Cicero, *Orator*, c. 17.—[I would speak also of gesture, under which the countenance is comprised.]

† Quintilian's *Instit.* L. VIII.—Cicero, *passim*.

‡ Quintilian, L. XI. c. 3.—Cicero, *Brutus*, c. 17, 18.

is known to have been much cultivated. Although in Egypt the arts generally had reached a high point of improvement while Greece was yet in a state of barbarism, as is testified by history, and especially by the impressive and august remains of Egyptian civilization still visible on the site of Thebes and elsewhere, (remains with which, even now, after they have braved for thousands of years the force of the elements, and moreover, have been during an immense period subject to human defacement and pillage, modern art, with all its pride, cannot compete in majesty or delicacy,) yet we have no evidence from history or from these monuments that eloquence flourished in any of its forms amid the wonderful might and beauty which that country must once have displayed. The reason is, no doubt, that it could find no nutriment in such a civil constitution as that of Egypt. Eloquence is the power of persuasion, and where force, not deliberation, reigns, there is small room for eloquence. For the same reason it was little, if at all, cultivated in most of the states of ancient times.

Greece was the country where civil liberty was first enjoyed to an extent worthy of much notice. With it came eloquence. Athens was the chief of all the Grecian states; and Athenian eloquence has never been surpassed. The youth of Athens, in its best days, were as carefully instructed in oratory as in arms; for the power of persuasion was as effectual in securing public favor and influence as military talents. Teachers were numerous. The sophists, so called, made instruction in rhetoric a special object of attention. Even the common people were severe critics as to those who addressed them. They possessed a delicacy of perception and taste, at which we cannot but be astonished. If an orator chanced to give a false quantity to a syllable, or to make an unsuitable gesture, the whole audience, we are told, would cry out against him.

The consequence attached to delivery among the Greeks is apparent from Plutarch's account concerning Demosthenes. The people were clamorous against him in his first attempts to address them, because of his glaring defects in point of manner. Such was the mortifying reception which Athens gave to him who afterwards became the chief of

“Those ancient, whose resistless eloquence  
Wielded at will that fierce democracy,



Shook the arsenal, and fulmin'd over Greece  
To Macedon, and Artaxerxes' throne.\*

The story of his strenuous assiduity in the correction of his delivery is well-known. His efforts were not disappointed, and he who was at first driven from the Athenian assembly by its noisy censure, became preeminent in propriety and force of manner.

Rome was never so refined a community as Athens, partly on account of the heterogeneous character of her population in the days of her greatness, and partly for other reasons which it is not pertinent to our purpose to investigate. Oratory in Greece advanced from rudeness to consummate excellence, unaided by previous examples; the Romans had the masterpieces of Grecian eloquence before them as models for study. Hence Roman eloquence, when it actually began to emerge from a rude condition, rose towards perfection with much more rapidity than Grecian. It did not exist so long, however, in purity and power, and was never so generally cultivated and revered, in Rome as in Greece. The rhetorical works of Cicero and Quintilian attest the care which the Romans bestowed upon delivery. Their youth were sent to the *Palæstræ* to acquire gracefulness of mien by various manly exercises; their voices were carefully trained, and when they engaged in the business of the forum or the senate-house they perceived the importance of this past discipline, and the necessity of present solicitude, in order that their elocution might be sufficiently attractive for the public taste.

Greece and Rome were almost the only countries of ancient times where eloquence flourished. It existed, in considerable splendor, in a few of the colonies and provinces of these states, but in these it seldom attained independent vigor, its main nutriment being, in general, derived from the metropolis. It was introduced into Rhodes by Æschines on his banishment from Greece, and reached so high an eminence there, that the Rhodian style became in Rome the current expression by which the most perfect oratory was designated, in distinction from the Attic and Asiatic styles, the Rhodian constituting a medium between the plainness of the former and the redundant ornament of the latter. To this island Cicero repaired for the purpose of receiving instruction from Apollo-

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\* Milton Par. Regained, Book IV. c. 268—72.

nus Molo. He likewise studied under several Asiatic rhetoricians.

In modern times oratorical excellence has been far from maintaining so conspicuous a position among the various topics of education as it held in Greece and Rome during the period of their grandeur. Moreover, the scanty attention which has been accorded to it, has not, in general, been directed with much judgment, and has naturally met with proportionate failure in the result. Delivery, especially, has been either neglected, or cultivated in great part upon false principles. Those of our day, who have exerted a vast influence by their powers of oratory, have commonly been obliged to unlearn most of the instructions which they received in early life, respecting elocution, before their powers could be brought to operate with any considerable force upon their hearers; and, already wearied by a task so difficult as this, very few of them have proceeded beyond this point, in order to cultivate an agreeable and forcible manner, by assiduous application, based upon accurate principles. Great men, in the present age, direct their care to the thoughts which they have to express, with no very great regard to the manner of their expression. They take little pains to give energy, melody, and variety to the voice, or propriety and grace to the gesture. The utter absence of these attractions which is observable in the oratory of some eminent speakers, attest the lamentable condition of modern taste in this respect. The sensitive Athenian, and even the duller Roman, would almost have shuddered at the manner of some of those who rank as our best orators. The real good qualities, with which the delivery of certain modern speakers has been or is distinguished, owe their existence, in general, almost wholly to nature. Art, which was so powerful in ancient days, now accomplishes comparatively little for the benefit of eloquence; it is much if its evil influence can be avoided or corrected.

One very important reason of the neglect with which delivery is treated in our day, is the increased facility of diffusing thought and information, arousing men's passions, and guiding their energies, by other means than oral address. Even in the most cultivated times of antiquity, the living voice was the only widely efficient instrument which the statesman could employ in moulding the opinions and feelings of his fellow-citizens. Indeed, though libraries were often collected and used by the wealthy few, upon the great mass of men little

direct influence of any class was exerted by writings. Instruction was communicated to learners almost exclusively by word of mouth. It was far more familiarly imparted than it is in general by modern teachers. Free conversation in shady recesses and solitary walks, formed its principal channel. In this simple way, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and other noted philosophers of Athens, spread abroad their sublime conceptions and swayed the opinions of men in far-distant lands. Listen to the apposite and elegant lines of Milton respecting that city.

" Athens, the eye of Greece, mother of arts  
 And eloquence, native to famous wits  
 Or hospitable, in her sweet recess  
 City or suburban, studious walks and shades.  
 See there the olive grove of Academe,  
 Plato's retirement, where the attic bird  
 Trills her thick warbled notes the summer long;  
 There flowery hill Hymettus, with the sound  
 Of bees' industrious murmur, oft invites  
 To studious musing; there Ilissus rolls  
 His whispering stream: within the walls then view  
 The schools of ancient sages; his who bred  
 Great Alexander to subdue the world,  
 Lyceum there, and painted Stoa next:  
           \*       \*       \*       \*       \*  
           \*       \*       see there his tenement,  
 Whom, well-inspired, the oracle pronounced  
 Wisest of men; from whose mouth issued forth  
 Mellifluous streams that watered all the schools."\*

In our day the art of writing is much more generally known, and, from the superiority of our writing materials, much more easily and conveniently employed than it was in Greece and Rome. The art of printing, however, or mechanical writing, forms the greatest distinction between ancient and modern times in respect to the means of communicating ideas; and it cannot reasonably be doubted that the almost superhuman energy of the silent press, has been fostered and maintained, at a considerable loss, in point of oral eloquence. The encomiums which are commonly lavished upon the advantages of the press, must, therefore, be dilated with some drops of allowance on this score, as well as certain others. Men who might have become noble orators, have been induced to content themselves with the exertion of that influence which they

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\* Milton, Par. Regained, L. IV. 240 — 54. 274 — 78.

could command by the diffusion of their thoughts in print ; and, in general, even the eminent public speakers of modern times attach far greater importance to the effect which will be produced by the perusal of their addresses, on the part of the thousands or millions under whose eyes they will be placed through the almost magic vigor of mechanic art, than to their primitive delivery before comparatively insignificant bodies of men. Hence, in a great measure, their neglect of effort and want of solicitude concerning their elocution. Other causes, also, which I have not space to consider, co-operate towards this result.

Let us now endeavor to obtain a just conception of the *degree of importance* which it is proper to ascribe to delivery. I have already alluded to the opinion of Demosthenes on this point. Quintilian says, that more depends upon delivery than upon the matter. He observes, that an indifferent address, enforced by the powers of action, will meet with more success than the very best composition which is destitute of their recommendation.\* Similar remarks are made by Cicero.† Rollin says respecting a good manner of address : “ It is that quality, the want of which it is most impossible to conceal, and the possession of which will best atone for other defects.”‡ Lord Chesterfield appears to have thought it almost the only thing worth very earnest effort in oratory. He professes that on his own part it was the sole object of attention when he spoke in Parliament ;|| and most of his speeches, we know, were received with very great applause. On the other hand, some writers, of whom Aristotle is perhaps the most noted, have depreciated delivery ; not, however, as being inefficient, but as exerting an influence which ought not to be regarded as justifiable. The same opinion has been entertained by very many persons. It is undoubtedly prevalent, to a considerable extent, in our own country. Must we admit it to be correct ? By no means. No reasonable objection lies against delivery in itself considered. The true ground of complaint is the mode in which the charms of delivery are sometimes employed to recommend error. But the very circumstance that they are thus employed makes it doubly important that their

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\* Instit. Orat. L. XI. c. 3. No. 2 and 5. † Orator, c. 17. No. 56, etc.

‡ Rollin's Belles Lettres, (English translation from the French,) Vol. ii. p. 628.

|| Letters to his Son. Letter 308.



efficacy should be resorted to in support of truth. He who neglects them, betrays, in part, the cause which he espouses. Delivery stands, in this respect, upon the same footing with what is called style in composition. As well might a man urge, that it is the duty of all authors to avoid ornament, or even perspicuity, in their style of writing, as denounce grace and propriety in elocution. Indeed, the principle which lies at the basis of the absurd objection we are considering, will be found, on attentive examination, to lead, if admitted and followed, to the utter destruction of every thing ornamental or lovely in life. Our powers of expression and all our natural advantages were bestowed upon us for a useful purpose, and are to be cultivated, not exterminated or neglected. We are bound to confer all possible attractions upon truth and virtue. The object of a speaker is to persuade. To please, merely, is a very considerable step towards the accomplishment of his object. Delivery, however, should have a much more important effect, than this of merely pleasing an audience. Its main purpose ought to be the enforcement of truth, by presenting it with distinctness and energy. This fact deserves careful consideration.

Aristotle's opinion, undoubtedly, owed its origin to his cold, contemplative habits, and was fostered by the exhibitions of rhetorical art which were common in his time, when Grecian oratory had begun to degenerate from the simplicity and force which characterized it at an earlier period. Demosthenes may be thought to have had an exaggerated notion of the degree of consequence to be attributed to delivery, on account of the great pains which he was compelled to take in order to perfect his own. Lord Chesterfield's sentiments respecting it coincide entirely with his sentiments respecting life in general. His whole philosophy of human nature is condensed in this single remark: "You will find that reason, which always ought to direct mankind, seldom does; but the passions and weaknesses commonly usurp its seat and rule in its stead."\* In perfect accordance with this general principle, when he speaks of the most efficient oratory, he says: "All have senses to be gratified, very few have reason to be applied to. Graceful utterance and action please their eyes, elegant diction tickles their ears; but strong reason would be thrown away upon

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\* Letters to his Son. Letter 308.

them.”\* There is too much of truth in these remarks ; although we are glad to believe, their accuracy in application to the inhabitants of some countries, is rapidly diminishing. A distinction must be carefully made between what is and what should be. We may wish that men were more sensible than they are ; but in our intercourse with them we must have regard to their actual characteristics. In this view we may discern the great importance of delivery in recommending good principles to minds unable or unwilling to hear and ponder a jejune statement of them unaccompanied by the charms of harmonious diction and a graceful and impressive mien. Zealous recourse to the effective weapons stored up in this department of the armory of eloquence, cannot but be commendable, if we take care to employ these weapons only on the side of integrity and truth. Nor is it necessary to regard Lord Chesterfield’s representation of mankind, as entirely, or indeed at all, correct, in order to uphold the importance of delivery. For the most intellectual hearer is influenced by it ; and why should he not be ? A good delivery is not a mere display for the gratification of the senses (though I think it is by no means to be despised in this light, for what gratification of the senses is more exquisite or more noble ?) ; but it gives body and impetus to thought and feeling, and sends them *home* into the soul of the auditor. Thus delivery does not, as is very commonly supposed, derive all its efficacy from man’s weaknesses. Its principles are drawn from the whole nature of man, as a being endued with the capacities of reason as well as emotion. Were man devoid of emotion, principles of delivery would still have place, and they would be identical with some of those which must be adopted now. It would still be requisite to express intellectual truth fully and precisely, and to do this it would be necessary to subject the voice and gesture to suitable training. As man is possessed of emotions of taste we must have respect to these in forming our manner of delivery. Nor is it at all inappropriate, but on the contrary commendable, that our delivery should be suited to the particular capacities and tastes of those whom we are addressing.

Those who consider attentively how many and important are the respects in which oral address can be made superior to silent reading in effective force, and then perceive that every point of this superiority falls within the province of the

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\* Letters to his Son. Letter 307.

science of elocution, will not wonder that this science should be pronounced worthy of assiduous application. Let it, however, keep its proper sphere. Manner should adorn and enforce matter, not supersede it. Lord Chesterfield remarks that "weight without lustre is lead." This is true; and it is equally true that lustre without weight is but tinsel. Thought is the material; style and delivery give it radiant beauty. Gold must be burnished in order to flash upon the vision. Thought without the aid of delivery is much like a folded balloon; something is requisite to swell it into its full proportions. There are, as it were, minute features to every conception of the mind. The general outline of a thought may be discerned, though it be very obscurely presented, as a man's form may be discerned by twilight; but only the broad sunlight of perfect style and delivery can reveal its traits with complete effect.

These observations indicate the *true aim* of the science of elocution. Notwithstanding Talleyrand, the distinguished French statesman, is said, whether truly or otherwise I do not know, to have declared that speech was given to man *to disguise his thoughts*, (a remark which might with equal propriety be extended to the expression of the countenance and frame,) I shall not hesitate to aver my belief, that the chief end of our powers of delivery is to make ourselves as far as possible *transparent*. This truth, faithfully dealt around in all its applications, would serve to detect most of the errors which exist in our present systems of instruction in elocution. *Grace*, in mien and diction, is indeed of some consequence; but the principal aim should be to cast off every tittle of that opaque crust with which so many souls are almost wholly enveloped, and to make thought and feeling blaze forth with the utmost intensity from every point of that mortal part which they inform. Delivery should transmit a thought or an emotion, as some crystal media transmit light, without impediment or refraction. Thus it will be effective. Instead of absorbing or scattering the rays of intellect and feeling, it will send them surely to their destination with energetic compactness. Such delivery demands that the heart be honest. There must be the steady, keen lustre of sincerity within; its place cannot be supplied by any transient meteor-glare which interested duplicity can kindle upon the surface without. Quintilian has been deemed very extravagant in declaring it necessary that an orator should be a good man. There is more

truth in the observation than has been acknowledged. Few dare to avow bad sentiments. Hence it is often the case that an orator who possesses a vicious heart undertakes to play the hypocrite. However artful the disguise, he cannot exert the power which sincerity would give him. Thus eloquence does depend, to an important extent, upon integrity. Indeed, I can hardly believe that without pure purpose aught worthy of the name of eloquence is possible.

The good qualities of delivery, then, as well as of style, may be reduced to two heads, perspicuity and grace. In delivery, as well as style, grace is of the less consequence by far ; yet it is essential to perfection. It generally aids perspicuity in both, by fixing the attention more closely upon what is communicated. The quality of perspicuity in delivery is very comprehensive. It demands a manner as various as the nature of the sentiments uttered. Its office is to give these sentiments, as they are conveyed to the hearer, the very impress belonging to them in the soul of their author. Grace in mien and diction, not only has that influence upon perspicuity which we have mentioned, but attracts the favorable regard of all who observe it, facilitates the passage of sentiment to the soul, and gives poignancy to its effect.

We come now naturally to inquire, what are the *best means* by which these qualities of delivery may be attained and perfected? In this inquiry it is of primary importance to determine the respective shares of nature and art in conferring the external endowments of consummate eloquence. Misapprehension and neglect of the distinction to which we refer has given rise to very many of the most prominent faults which disfigure systems of Elocution now in vogue. Even in the self-same system we find that which can be procured only by the hand of art left to nature or accident, and the proper province of nature invaded by the comparatively dull formality of art. Art, however, receives far more of real homage than nature ; what is granted to the latter being granted, usually, rather through neglect than through thoughtful intention, while to art is awarded by common, though lamentable consent, the credit of being the main source of effect in delivery. Fatal mistake ! The principal well-spring of eloquence in matter or manner is emotion. Art may pour in her subsidiary streams to augment the force of nature's mighty tide, and thus be useful ; but unless she is subservient to nature, she must be comparatively inefficient, and moreover, the little



efficiency she possesses must be hurtful, and cannot merit the approbation of an honest mind.

“Unerring nature, still divinely bright,  
One clear, unchanged, and universal light,  
Life, force, and beauty, must to all impart,  
At once the source, and end, and test of art;”\*

or a speaker can at best be but a paragon of hypocrisy.

Articulate sounds, considered merely as such, are wholly conventional, and differ very much in different languages. Their enunciation is acquired and perfected as an art. But the tones denoting emotion which accompany articulate language, owe their origin to nature, not art. Hence it is idle to endeavor to produce them by artificial rules. Art may imitate the natural tones of feeling, but never equal them. In a work miscalled a “Philosophy of the Human Voice,” which has been regarded with much respect as a noble contribution to the science of Elocution, an attempt is made to analyse the intonations of the voice by principles of art. Indeed, common vocal utterance is treated by the author of this book as if it were a system of artificial music. Among other things, the rise and fall of the voice in speaking are designated by fixed intervals. Strange that such a scheme should be devised by a man of sense, and acquire repute among enlightened men! What would be thought of a man who should undertake to construct an analogous system, denominated a Philosophy of the *Human Countenance*, denoting by artificial means the various delicate and flitting expressions which spring up in the features from internal emotion? I trust that universally and at once the undertaking would be scouted as ridiculous. Yet geometrical admeasurement by lines and angles is really as applicable to a smile or a frown, as a plan of musical notes to the voice of one speaking in earnest. The expression of the voice is often as delicate and evanescent as that of the countenance. Instead of always exhibiting determinate intervals, it often rises and falls in correspondence with the equable increase or diminution of feeling, melting, as it were, upward or downward, not altering by a sudden and marked transition. Moreover, real intervals in the voice may be almost infinitely various. The impossibility of fixing the degree of emotion by

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\* Pope's Essay on Criticism. Part I. 70—74.

any artificial rules involves the impossibility of fixing its expression.

Thus the theory referred to is plainly inaccurate. But were it accurate, its practice could not do much, if any good, and would almost certainly do much injury. Real emotion always suffices of itself to regulate its expression by proper tones; and it only can regulate them with perfect precision. To admit the interference of art in the matter must be worse than useless. Why not as well attempt to regulate a *blush* by art? There are characteristics of the human voice as truly out of the sphere of art as a blush. When a man is angry, the tones of anger present themselves unbidden. He does not need philosophy for their attainment; though he may need it for their suppression. Suppose that a man of science, after having attentively examined the act of shutting the eyes, and determined what muscles are exerted in it, and how they are exerted, should undertake to impress upon others the importance of the knowledge which he had attained, in order that they might shut their eyes with propriety, would they be inclined to consider this knowledge as of any use in the performance of the act. Would they not reply, what you say may be very true, but we have generally been able to shut our eyes when we wished to do so, without knowing anything about the muscles which you mention? Just as readily will an orator exhibit the exact tones of emotion, if he feel it; and if he do not, he should not attempt to exhibit them.

The case is the same in regard to *gestures* expressive of emotion. Yet efforts have been made to designate these, too, by artificial means. A large quarto volume was published in London, in 1806, called "*Chironomia, or a Treatise on Rhetorical Delivery*, by Gilbert Austin," in which manual gesture is taught by diagrams. The value of this system may be perceived, in part, from the two following remarks of the author. After applying it in a particular instance, he says: "The manner of delivery is such as occurred, and *might have been varied in a thousand ways.*" In another part of his book, having treated of certain gestures which he terms non-significant, he says: "These may be used in any part of an oration, and *belong to every character of style and speaking.*"

In the first place, such a system must fail to comprehend more than comparatively a few out of the boundless variety of human gestures, all of which may be significant and appropriate in certain cases; and, moreover, could we attain to per-

fection in an artificial representation of this kind, it would be of no use for the expression of real feeling.

It may be laid down as an invariable principle of delivery, that all tones and gestures which indicate emotion, should be involuntarily urged into existence by the actual struggles of that emotion to gain a passage from within outward.\* None of the artificial rules upon which we have remarked are of the least avail, except in counterfeiting feelings not actually existing. Their influence in cases of real emotion is to dispel it. To have recourse to them, is like substituting for the stirring energy and loveliness of life, the senseless, formal, despicable aspect and faculties of an automaton. Emotion and art cannot coalesce in the soul. The former is too delicate to bear the rough contact of the latter. It fades before it, as the dainty, variegated brilliancy on the wing of the butterfly disappears at our touch. The hypocritical mimic alone can reap advantage from the rules in question. By their aid such a person may perhaps become a manifold and stupendous, though still bungling, lie.

The author of the "Philosophy of the Human Voice," asserts that the pleasure imparted by sculpture and painting comes from a disciplined reflection on those principles of taste that directed their production. On this point I will only say, that he merits pity, who is susceptible of no pleasure at the sight of a picture or a statue, but what results from disciplined reflection on principles. When, however, the writer extends his remark to oratory, there is far more cogent reason to deny his accuracy. Eloquence does not derive its origin from taste; it does not appeal to taste. It gushes from other, deeper fountains; it makes its way towards and through other, deeper channels. On any thrilling occasion oratory regulated most strictly by principles of taste alone, must give rise to aversion instead of pleasure.

Besides the two very remarkable works which have been mentioned, there exists a multitude of smaller volumes which inculcate the same or a similar faulty system of voice and gesture. Some of them may claim the merit of considerable originality, but many of them owe nearly, if not quite, all

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\* Says Fenelon, "Il faut remuer les bras parcequ'on est animé; mais il ne faudroit pas, pour paroître animé, remuer les bras." (We must move our arms because we are animated; and not try to appear animated by moving our arms.)

their contents to these two vast storehouses of erroneous doctrine, which have attained a high, though bad, eminence. The principles which have been censured are, moreover, to a greater or less extent, followed by most teachers of Elocution in our seminaries. Only a deep-seated conviction that they are unsound and very mischievous in their operation, could have induced me to venture the criticisms which I have expressed.

If my observations are correct, it is dishonest, useless, and hurtful to resort to art for the tones and gestures indicative of emotion. But, it may be inquired, is there anything of considerable consequence left for art to do, now that you have prohibited her from meddling with that part of delivery which she is accustomed to regard as properly within her province, and which you yourself admit to be the essential part? I answer, yes! much; as will soon be seen. First, however, I must restrict the province of art yet further, by declaring that, in my opinion, the less of conscious operation it exerts upon *any* part of delivery *at the moment of speaking*, the better.\* Present art in delivery implies attention to something else besides our sentiments; and in proportion as our attention is drawn away from what we are saying, the distinctness of our conceptions and the warmth of our feelings is diminished. Hence we should be losers, even were our delivery improved; but, on the contrary, this diminution must enfeeble all of delivery which depends on the sentiment within, that is to say the principal part, a part which is sufficient alone (and the only one thus sufficient,) for the exhibition of sublime eloquence, in spite of deficiency in any—all other parts; a part, therefore, which should be guarded against detriment more carefully than the apple of the eye. Conception and emotion should engross the whole man in speaking; else they will be marred themselves, and thus will not in any respect perform their perfect work. The proper office of art in regard to delivery is previous training, the formation of *good habits*, which may act without conscious effort. Habit is a

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\* A German writer, John Matthew Gesner, manifests a partial perception of this truth. He says: "Inter dicendum non semper cogitari potest de præceptis. Ille ipse decor naturalis, assuetudo, mentis ardor, inter dicendum, *nobis non sentientibus*, dictat omnia." (In speaking we cannot always be thinking of precepts. Natural grace, custom, mental ardor, dictate everything without consciousness on our part.) *Isagoge*. Leips. 1784. Vol. I. p. 331.



principle of energy throughout the universe. What are called the laws of mind and matter may as properly be called habits. These general, fundamental habits cannot be altered by human art; they derive their source from nature, that is divine art, and are not destructible except at the fiat of the great Artist. Yet man is endued with some power and skill to manage these habits as he desires. Although he cannot alter them, he partially subjects them to his ends by combining or confronting them with each other. The word habit, however, has commonly a more particular sense, denoting, not anything originally inherent, but only an acquired tendency or capacity. Such habits, whether material or mental, are, to a peculiar extent, under our command. They are not only directed, like those we have just been considering, but modified, sometimes destroyed, and even created, by human art. If unmolested in their operation, their strength augments with their continuance. Thus it is with the accustomed course of a stream. The longer it runs in a particular channel, the more difficult it becomes to dam or divert it, (unless there be some interfering influence,) because its channel is constantly enlarging. Thus it is, too, with the direction which a tree takes in growing. The power which is requisite to control it depends on the length of time during which its tendency has been gaining strength. Thus it is, too, as is commonly perceived, with the habits of brutes. In regard to them I need not particularise. The importance of habit in man's nature we all know to be great, but we have probably never appreciated it. It is well worth our while to consider thoughtfully how much of human activity is referrable to this principle. Good habit saves much effort. It is not a fleet courser like genius, but it is a valuable beast of burthen. If we exercise care in loading it, it will go forward sturdily under a weight which at first may seem sufficient to crush it. It is advisable to keep it always jogging; for it constantly mends its pace as it proceeds, but if suffered to stop and doze for any considerable time it is generally very difficult to rouse it and get it again in motion. Now, in regard to all that part of delivery which is not to be left entirely to the influence of present conception and emotion habit is all in all. The highest eloquence cannot waste a thought on manner. All its influence upon manner, vast as it is, is an unconscious influence. Oratory, however, must display qualities which cannot be at once called into being by sentiment. These depend on habit. Habit, whether good or bad, will

control them when emotion fires the soul. In true eloquence, the whole of delivery is prompted by genius and habit conjointly. That part of it which falls under the sway of habit, is of much, though secondary, importance. I say secondary, because it is so in point of rank ; yet oratory cannot exist without it. We have by nature capacities of voice and action which, like all our capacities, may be greatly improved by training. Here is ample scope for art. Her efforts in this her proper field ought to be far more sedulous, and might procure a far more valuable harvest than the efforts that have heretofore been expended by her upon all the wide domain which she has appropriated without title. Her utmost skill and toil can hardly be superfluous. It is requisite, in order to consummate eloquence, that the speaker should exhibit, not only just conception and emotion, but also exact, graceful, and impressive utterance and mien. Lofty eloquence may perhaps exist without excellence in these latter characteristics ; but it must in such a case be defective. Manner is an instrument grasped by the hand of genius ; and the instrument must be faultless, or the force which wields it will not fully display its efficiency.

I now proceed to mention more particularly those characteristics of voice and gesture to which the culture of art ought to be directed.

The points of expertness which the voice must possess in good delivery may be distinguished into two classes ; one relating to the elements and arbitrary rules of speech, the other to the inherent properties of the voice.

Under the first class are comprised *articulation*, *pronunciation*, and all other arbitrary usages of grammar. Articulation is proper utterance of vocal elements. Pronunciation commonly signifies utterance of words, that is of combinations of vocal elements. Accurate articulation is, of course, essential to accurate pronunciation. The latter, also, demands much additional knowledge. In these and other artificial customs as to vocal language most men are very deficient, as may be readily observed by any one possessing considerable nicety of perception respecting sounds. There is great variety in the modes of articulating the same letter, and pronouncing the same word, although but one can be correct. Even when the ear and voice are good, assiduity is requisite in order to attain exactness in these respects.

We come now to the inherent properties of the voice.

Those which are most under the control of human art, are *compass* and *distinctness*. Vocal compass is of two sorts, one relating to tones as high or low, the other relating to them as loud or soft. Both sorts of compass, are called into action in speaking, and the greater the inherent variety of compass, the more exact may be the expression of sentiment in all its manifold kinds and degrees. Everything is acted upon according to its present nature ; and sedulous endeavor to augment the capacity of the voice as to the exhibition of sentiment will produce wonderful effects.

The first species of compass, that relating to the rise and fall of the voice, comprehends two points to which culture should be directed, viz. the extension of its limits and delicacy within these limits. The voice should be trained to reach as high and as low tones as possible. We should aim, too, to have intermediate space under perfect command. We should strive for the power to ascend and descend with ease through all the course of sound from one extreme of our vocal compass to the other, and to vary the gradations of ascent and descent at pleasure. Milton describes these excellencies when he eulogises

“ The melting voice through mazes running,  
Untwisting all the chains that tie  
The hidden soul of harmony.”\*

Similar remarks may be made as to the second species of compass, viz. that relating to loudness and softness of tone. Compass in this respect, likewise, is susceptible of very great improvement, both in the limits and the delicacy of its variation. Our public criers bear witness to the degree of extension which it may reach in one direction ; and many of our effeminate exquisites to that which it may reach in the other. Some eminent singers exhibit astonishing ability in this species of compass. The aim of all speakers should be to attain excellence in both directions ; to render the voice capable alike of stentorian vigor, or almost spiritual softness. A well cultivated voice much resembles the trunk of the elephant, which, with sufficient strength to prostrate trees in the forest, possesses sufficient delicacy to raise a needle from the ground.

Some writers speak of voices which are so loud that they cannot be heard. It is difficult to perceive what is meant by

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\* L'Allegro, l. 142—5.

such language. In the cases to which it refers, the impossibility of hearing is most certainly owing to some other circumstance than mere loudness of tone. The notion alluded to is the same as that which certain dunces, yclept philosophers, have broached respecting the music of the spheres, and which is mentioned by Butler as follows :

“ The music of the spheres,  
So loud it deafens mortal ears,  
As wise philosophers have thought,  
And that’s the cause we hear it not.”\*

Let us now pass from compass of voice to distinctness. It may at first be thought that I have already considered this point in speaking of articulation ; but I mean something different here by distinctness. It denotes a general habit of the voice, belonging to all its sounds, articulate or inarticulate, being not mere correctness, but a sort of compactness of utterance. This is far more essential to a speaker than great loudness. A very weak voice is easily heard if it be only distinct. You are all aware how very defective common voices are in this respect. In listening to some speakers I have been forcibly reminded of Butler’s account of the voice of his hero

“ It had an odd, promiscuous tone,  
As if he had talked three parts in one ;  
Which made some think, when he did gabble,  
They heard three laborers of Babel,  
Or Cerberus himself pronounce  
A *leash* of languages at once.”†

Distinctness of voice depends much upon nature, but may be improved by care in managing our vocal organs. It demands that the tone of the voice should be pure, cloudless, metallic, and that the sounds uttered should be, as it were, clipped short.

Different voices vary very much in natural qualities. The nicety of variation which they exhibit is wonderful ; as, also, is the nicety of the ear in distinguishing them. Reflection on the varieties in human features has often excited high admiration. Varieties of voice are perhaps as numerous. We dis-

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\* Hudibras, Part II. Cant. I. l. 617—20.

† “ Part I. Cant. I. l. 99—104.



tinguish a friend by his voice nearly as well as by his countenance. It is probably as rare for two men to have voices exactly alike, as features. Inattentive or dull men frequently do not perceive distinctions which really exist, and hence pronounce things identically the same which are not so. Many of the natural qualities of the voice impart to it "a grace beyond the reach of art." Art may hereafter reach further than she is now able; but there must always be achievements beyond her power. The voice seems to be naturally more perfect in some countries than in others. Cicero extols the peculiar sweetness of tone which the voices of the Athenians possessed even in his time, when the days of their glory were long past.\* No voice is, however, so perfect by nature that it cannot be improved. It is pertinent to remark, that the general state of the body has much influence upon the voice. Everything which conduces to health tends to improve vocal ability. If we desire to "discourse most eloquent music" with the greatest possible facility, we must pay strict deference to the physical laws of our constitution.

Let us now turn our attention for a brief space to gesture. That it is very important to do what we can to improve this, is clear. The significance of the countenance and attitude imparts to painting, and especially to sculpture a very large proportion of their effect. Life, however, possesses a force of expression which can never be equalled by art. Under the influence of sentiment the human frame becomes animated accordingly. Natural defects or habits of awkwardness may restrain the influence of sentiment. All that art has to do with gesture is to remedy natural defects as far as possible, and to substitute graceful for awkward habits. Even Austin says: "If an orator is truly good and sincere, the expression of his countenance will not belie the feelings of his heart.†" Nor, if a man be sincere, will any part of his frame positively belie his feelings, though it may express them imperfectly and awkwardly. Sometimes, as in the case of Patrick Henry, the force of emotion is such as to drive away bad habits of gesture. Commonly, however, they manifest more

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\* De oratore, L. III. c. ii. "Euriditissimos homines Asiaticos quivis Atheniensis indoctus, non verbis, sed *sono vocis*, nec tam bene quam *suaviter* loquendo, facile superabit." (Any illiterate Athenian will plainly excel the most learned Asiatics in the tone of his voice though not in the choice of his words, — in speaking agreeably rather than correctly.)

† *Chironomia*, p. 96.

pertinacity. The parentage of these bad habits is to be traced to constraint of some sort or other. The body or a particular limb is kept too much in one position. Awkwardness in artisans may be referred in great part to their habitual occupation. The best mode of removing awkwardness and imparting grace is free and varied exercise of every part of the frame. On this account the Greek and Roman youth were sent to the gymnasium and *palæstræ*, to engage in different athletic sports. Hence, in our day, dancing does so much to impart grace to the mien. The general direction, then, as to this part of elocution is, form habits of grace in every variety of action, and leave the particular species of action to unconscious impulse.

I propose now to make some remarks on *reading aloud*, *declamation*, and *conversation*, as means of improving delivery.

It will be thought, perhaps, that if the principles which I have stated concerning delivery are correct as to the utterance of one's own sentiments, they are not applicable to the utterance of the sentiments of others. The cases are indeed considerably different. In reading, for example, there is much to disturb our capacity of perceiving and feeling the original import of what we utter, while in extemporaneous oratory this cannot be the case. Still, I maintain, that in reading for the purpose of imparting the sense of what we read, our best course is, to direct our attention just as exclusively as we can to the matter, permitting the tones of the voice and other parts of our manner to be adjusted unconsciously by our own internal emotion co-operating with habit. The ease with which we can do this will depend very much on the readiness with which we can seize the sense of what we are reading, and this depends much on natural mental endowments. The expert reader has an advantage over others in this point; for his expertness makes it unnecessary that he should attend so closely to the characters before him or to their enunciation. Other circumstances, also, have a considerable bearing on this point. The same principles of utterance, then, are to be applied to reading as to oratory. There are, indeed, reasons why it is more difficult to apply them to the one than to the other; but these reasons increase just as much the difficulty of applying any principles, so that if the principles we have laid down as to oratory are the best, they cannot but be the best as to reading also. I say nothing of

gesture, for I believe it is generally admitted that in mere reading the expression of the countenance and frame may be left to impulse. As, in order to real eloquence in delivering one's own thoughts, everything external must be taken care of by previous habit, and at the moment of utterance be entirely forgotten, so it is in the most effective reading. Sterne was aware of this. "I should have read it ten times better, Sir, answered Trim, but that my heart was so full.—That was the very reason, Trim, replied my father, which has made thee read the sermon as well as thou hast done."\* Practice in this manner of reading is requisite in order to attain even the most essential points of excellence, viz. those which are inspired by adequate feeling; and only very long and very earnest practice will suffice to overcome completely the propensity of the mind to attend to what it should not. A reader's attention is in general directed purposely to points concerning manner. The mode of reading which has been enjoined is extremely rare; and constant adherence to it was probably never manifested. It is almost always utterly neglected by teachers of reading. The artificial mode is usually inculcated. I do not object entirely to the practice of directing attention to manner in reading. I desire only that this practice should be properly regarded and conducted. In the first place, the reader should understand the difference between this mode of reading and the higher. He should be made to feel that the former is but a means to a noble exhibition of the latter. In the next place, in the inferior mode of reading, those points dependent on emotion should not be regarded at all. Attention should be directed as exclusively as possible to those points concerning utterance which we have represented as within the proper province of art. Moreover, I would recommend that these minor characteristics of good reading be analysed into as minute principles as possible, and each particular principle be occasionally the exclusive object of attention. This plan of reading, pursued to an extent commensurate, no more than commensurate, with its importance, will undoubtedly be productive of very desirable results in regard to that higher, consummate reading, in which the soul is too deeply penetrated by sentiment to be conscious of anything beside. In *genuine* reading (I think the distinction conveyed

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\* Tristram Shandy, Chap. 17.



by this epithet is perfectly just,) such faults as can be remedied by attention will almost always be more conspicuous to an observer, to a teacher for example, than in the other species. These faults should be remarked in present silence; but when the reading is finished, comments may be made upon them, and they may become the objects of care on the other system. No care respecting them should be suffered to intrude itself into real reading. A teacher should not rest satisfied without clear evidence that it does not. It is better to exhibit a fault than to be thinking how to avoid it when sentiment ought to exert its full sway over the manner.

Dr. Whately, an original and uncommonly correct thinker on the subject of elocution, maintains that there is a proper distinction between the manner of reading the thoughts of another and that of speaking one's own.\* The proof which he adduces and terms "decisive," viz. that "if any one overhears the voice of another, to whom he is an utter stranger—suppose in the next room—without being able to catch the sense of what is said, he will hardly ever be for a moment at a loss to decide whether he is reading or speaking,"—proves only that there is a distinction in common practice, not that there should be. There is but one best way of expressing sentiments, and that way ought in all cases to be the object of desire and exertion. Circumstances may, indeed, make it more difficult of attainment in one case than in another; but this is no sufficient reason for ever neglecting to aim at it. Is it not clear that the perfect mode of expressing the same sentiments in the same circumstances must be the same, whether they come extempore from the soul, are spoken from memory, or are read? The hindrances to the exhibition of that perfect mode, must, indeed, be more numerous in speaking from memory, especially if the sentiments are another's, than in speaking one's own extempore, and are in general greater in reading one's own sentiments, or especially another's, than in either of the former cases; but the force of these hindrances may be indefinitely diminished.

The custom of speaking from memory in our seminaries of learning, is commonly called declamation. In Rome, as we are informed by Quintilian,† declamations were commonly original. They are not usually so among us. They differ

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\* Elements of Rhetoric, p. 256, 7, and 260. (American edition.)

† Quint. Inst. L. X. c. 5. No. 14.



from reading in being naturally accompanied with more gesture, since they impose less constraint upon the human frame than reading. I think that they may be made extremely beneficial to delivery. So many and such bad practices, however, prevail in regard to them, that as now conducted they are probably the source of far more injury than benefit. Dr. Whately condemns, in the most unqualified manner, all recitation of speeches in schools. In this I think he errs. In my judgment it is only necessary that the principles which have just been proposed as to reading should be observed likewise in declamation. Let there be two species of declamation, one for training and the other for the manifestation of the results of training. In the former let those points respecting delivery which have been represented as susceptible of culture, be sedulously and solely regarded. It would probably be well to select a particular point as the object of exclusive attention, for a while, on the part of both declaimer and teacher. Always have it understood that exercises of this nature are only means to a higher end. In the other species of declamation the soul should be concentrated as much as possible on the sentiment delivered, and the manner left to nature and habit. The speaker should be constantly taught that his delivery must be imperfect, and imperfect in respects of far more consequence than any which present attention can adjust, if his mind is at all disturbed by consideration of his manner. In this mode of declamation the actual inherent defects of the speaker may be most easily and fully perceived, and pains may be taken to remedy them subsequently on the other plan.

I have said that the prevalent practice respecting declamation is extremely faulty. In the first place, it is usually conducted on the system which I have censured, of producing excellence in delivery through effort at the moment. It is unnecessary to remark further on this topic. In the next place, the selection of what are called *pieces* for declamation is not generally made with much wisdom. Care is not taken to suit these pieces to the declaimer's capacity. This must be considered a fault even on the principles of delivery, which have been censured; for even in art it is best for us to advance gradually from simple to complicated objects of effort. The fault is peculiarly glaring, however, in the light of true principles of delivery, according to which the main effect of it depends on the exactness with which the speaker

appreciates the sentiments uttered. The result of the errors to which we have referred, may be seen in the usual manner of school-declamation. Why, there is not probably a single individual of much sense, who, if he were to see that manner which he applauds at what is termed an exhibition, displayed in a town-hall in debate on real business, would not feel irresistibly impelled to smile. Yet what is, or at least should be, the object of school-declamation, but to prepare for the arena of actual debate in manhood? Is it the best mode of attaining the capacity of excellence in one kind of speaking to be always practising another?

In real declamation pupils should speak only what they can understand, and they should understand it before speaking. The teacher should be satisfied that they do in some good degree enter into the spirit of what they are to declaim before they begin. It is not probable that the heavens will fall because a child does not declaim difficult pieces till some years after the usual period. On the one plan he never can learn to declaim them well; on the other he may in time reach excellence. In the inferior kind of declamation, which may properly be practised, as I have said, for the purpose of training, it is of less consequence that the pupil should perfectly comprehend the sense of what he utters. It is best, however, that he should.

Conversation is not usually regarded as an important means of improving the manner of orators; and yet I cannot but say that, in my opinion, far more of real benefit generally accrues to delivery from the practice of common conversation, than from any and every effort expressly designed for the cultivation of oratorical powers. It is in familiar discourse that the principles which I have advocated come most frequently into operation. In truth, conversation much more nearly resembles the highest kinds of oratory than reading does, or even set declamation. The grandest eloquence is only earnest talk. Its subject and the occasion may be exalted, and the nature of these will affect the speaker's manner; but they should do so no otherwise than they do in all talk. Conversation has often been a magnificent scene, when gifted minds have heaped up their various treasures upon a favorite and stirring topic. Eloquence is one and the same in all essential points, whether in a drawing-room, or in a senate-chamber. The habit of being absorbed by the sentiment we are uttering, which has been represented as of so much consequence, can

be most easily cultivated in conversation. In social intercourse there is motive to this habit aside from any conviction of its value. Every thing is real. We are not compelled to task our imagination in fancying a situation different from our actual one ; we are, or should be, talking our own sentiments extempore, to persons who are face to face with us and animated like ourselves. I think it will be found from observation that few, if any, who are reserved or formal in society are ever truly eloquent. Present attention to manner is as improper in conversation as in that other species of discourse called oratory. Faults as to manner may be pointed out by a friend at some fitting season, and be remedied by private discipline. That private discipline should of course have no direct reference to points which depend on emotion. The attempt to regulate the tones of feeling in conversation, by any artificial system of the voice, such as that of which I have spoken, would, I presume, never be made. Yet, were the system true and valuable philosophy, it would be as reasonable that we should regulate our voices by it in common conversation as in any discourse. Everybody, however, uses suitable tones, without reflection, when earnestly engaged in talking. If tones corresponding to what is uttered are not used, the heart does not feel it. If a man says nothing in company that he does not feel, his manner cannot but be impressive in spite of deficiencies. These deficiencies, moreover, may be remedied or at least diminished by exclusive attention in private. He who excels in conversation has done much to make himself a good public orator. Let him only abandon every endeavor to appear in public with an essentially different manner from that which he wears in ordinary society.

From the remarks which I have made upon Elocution I think it must be clear that it is not

“ A liberal art which costs no pains  
Of study, industry or brains,”\*

like one of which Butler speaks, but that, on the contrary, only the most assiduous and persevering discipline can secure great excellence in it. I by no means believe, that in times past too much pains have been bestowed upon oratorical delivery, but that those pains have in general been wrongly di-

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\* Butler's Hudibras, Part I. Cant. I. l. 483, 4.

rected. Although I would apply to this science, as to all others, the following lines of Shenstone :

“O loved simplicity ! be thine the prize !  
Assiduous art, correct her work in vain !  
His be the palm, who, guiltless of disguise,  
Contains the power, the dull resource, to feign.”\*

I still think that there is enough to task the energies of “assiduous art” in her own true sphere of labor. I have endeavored to distinguish her proper share in delivery from that of nature. The due observance of this distinction is fundamental. Oratory which has been carefully formed with a due observance of it will withdraw the mind of the hearer from the consideration of external manner, and fix it upon the sentiments uttered ; and yet that manner, notwithstanding the hearer is unconscious of its influence, will in truth affect him far more forcibly than it could were his thoughts directed to it. This mode of cultivating oratory, therefore, will be the most effectual in accomplishing every desirable object in regard to both matter and manner.

The subject of these remarks is of greater importance to the people of these United States, than to any other people upon earth ; for in no country has eloquence so wide a scope for influence as in our own. In other lands fear is an open and very considerable agent in subjecting the people to their rulers. It is, indeed, an agent of greater consequence in some than in others. In ours, however, popular consent is the essential principle of government. Of how great moment, therefore, among us is the power, which Milton describes,

“By winning words to conquer willing hearts,  
And make persuasion do the work of fear.”†

Its moment is more and more fully perceived from day to day, and in my opinion, few, if any, departments of instruction are destined within the next half century to undergo so thorough a reform in this country as that of ELOCUTION.

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\* Shenstone's Elegies. El. 1.

† Paradise Regained, Book I. l. 222, 3.





# LECTURE VI.

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ON THE

RELATION SUBSISTING BETWEEN THE

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

AND

FACULTY OF A UNIVERSITY, &c.

By REV. JASPER ADAMS,  
PRESIDENT OF CHARLESTON COLLEGE.



## MR. ADAMS' LECTURE.

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AT the close of the Revolution which severed these United States from Great Britain, the number of our universities and colleges was eight only ;\* the number now organized is nearly a hundred. Many of these institutions are feeble, as the original eight all were, during and at the close of our colonial existence, but their establishment is good proof of a spirit on the part of the people of this country, worthy of all commendation and encouragement. They have been planted with the original settlement of the country itself, and they may be expected to grow with its growth and strengthen with its strength. They must continue to be, as they have hitherto been, the foundation of our honor and renown, the prime sources of our moral prosperity and welfare ; the fountains whence are to flow, the fertilizing waters of literature, of science, of philosophy, and of religion. Our country, too, is blessed with very numerous institutions designed for the study of law, medicine and theology, which have attained to various degrees of strength and stability. Besides these several classes of institutions for the attainment of liberal and professional learning, we have hundreds of academies, a considerable number of which have attained to much distinction and usefulness. The permanent success of these institutions, essentially involves, as has been suggested, the great cause of the literature, the science, the morals, the religion and the education of the country. Every thing which we are accus-

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\* Pitkin's Civil and Political History of the United States, Vol. I. p. 153.



tomed to esteem most valuable, must sooner or later take its moral and intellectual tone from the character of these institutions. The magnitude of the interests, therefore, which they involve, cannot fail to render whatever pertains to their structure, character and usefulness, an object of superlative importance to every American patriot and citizen. I could not fail, therefore, to be justified in inviting the attention of the American Institute of Instruction, to *any feature* in their organization, which, on the one hand, might promise to enhance their efficiency and promote their usefulness; or which, on the other, might threaten to paralyze their energies, and impair or destroy the hopes and confidence reposed in them by the country which has founded and cherished them.

Our universities, colleges, academies, — our institutions too for the study of law, medicine and divinity, are, with very few exceptions, established on essentially the same plan. They consist of a corporate board of trustees, whose number varies from seven up to fifty or sixty persons, in whom the legal interest of the institution is vested. The beneficial interest belongs to the public. Besides this corporate board of trustees, there is sometimes attached to the institution a board of oversight, or superintendence, who have the power of affirming or exposing the proceedings of the inferior board, who have the right of interference when they think proper, and who are entitled to be consulted on extraordinary occasions. Such is the constitution of Harvard University. The common law right of visitation resides in the founder, his heirs, or his representative. This right is, therefore, sometimes in the state, sometimes in an individual, or several individuals, and sometimes in a select body of men, to whom the right of visitation has been transferred by the founder. The right of visitation in Harvard University is said to reside in the Board of Overseers.\*

A faculty of which these institutions further consist, is a select body of learned men, to whom the instruction and the administration of the discipline are, generally with some qualification, entrusted. It is, too, a body perfectly well recognised as distinct from the board of trustees. The administra-

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\* Mr. Webster thinks, that the visitatorial power in Harvard University belongs to the fellows, or members of the corporation; though he admits, that "some power of inspection is given to the overseers." Wheaton's Reports, Vol. IV. p. 567. — Letter to John Lowell, Esq., ascribed to Edward Everett. Boston, 1824, pp. 91 — 93.

tion of the discipline comprises the judicial and executive authority of the institution. The faculty customarily assemble by themselves to transact the business of the institution, they are governed by their own rules, they act by their president, or by a committee of their own body, they usually have their own secretary, and keep a record of their own proceedings. The faculty, moreover, are the body, which is held by the public, to be chiefly responsible for the good conduct of the institution. It is the department through which it is practically known to the community, and on which it must principally depend for character and usefulness. The pupils and the parents communicate almost entirely with the faculty, scarcely at all with the trustees. And it is a part of the history of the literary institutions of this country, that they have been chiefly built up by the sacrifices, the exertions, and the wise management of their faculties. The presiding member of the faculty, often, though by no means always, holds his office during good behaviour, and sometimes, though not often, the professors hold theirs by the same tenure. The presiding member of the faculty is usually a member (*ex officio*) of the board of trustees.

This rapid statement of the manner in which our universities, colleges, academies, and schools of the professions of whatever kind, are usually constituted, has not been made without a special object in view. It is preliminary to the examination which, on this occasion, I propose to make, into the nature of the relation which subsists between the trustees and faculties of these institutions, and into the chief reciprocal duties which spring from this relation. Unquestionably, it is the duty both of the trustees and faculties of the important institutions entrusted to them, to co-operate with each other harmoniously and energetically in building up their institutions, in providing them with every thing necessary to successful instruction, in conciliating public favor to them, and inspiring public confidence in them. It is very manifest, that all this is their duty ; but it is equally the duty of every good citizen to do the same thing, as opportunity permits and occasion is presented. This view and this language, then, are too general and too indefinite to be instructive ; and to be really and practically informed on this subject, we must descend to particulars. The inquiry must be narrowed down to the nature of this relation, and the peculiar duties arising from it. To this

end, and with a view to secure to myself the advantages of order and arrangement, I propose, —

I. To inquire into the legal character of the relation, and to state the legal principles and doctrines, which have a bearing on it, so far as I have been able to collect them.

II. To draw aid and illustration from the reason of the thing, and from the analogies furnished by other kindred relations.

III. To examine it by the light of experience drawn from the history of our colleges and other literary institutions.

I. The corporate character of the board of trustees has already been adverted to. "Corporations for the advancement of learning, (denominated by us colleges,) were entirely unknown to the ancients, and are," says Chancellor Kent, "the fruits of modern invention. In the time of the later Roman Emperors, however, the professors in the different sciences, began to be allowed regular salaries from the government, to become objects of public regulation and discipline. By the close of the third century," continues he, "these literary establishments, especially the schools at Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria and Berytus, began to assume the appearance of public institutions; and privileges and honors were bestowed upon the professors and students, who were subjected to visitation and inspection, by the civil and ecclesiastical powers. It was not, however, until at least the 13th century, that colleges and universities began to confer degrees, and to attain the authority and influence which they now enjoy. The University of Paris was the first which assumed the form of our modern colleges."\*

The board of trustees is designed to give the institution perpetuity of existence, and along with this, a stability and permanence, which could not be secured by a private institution depending on the life, talents and resources of one or more individuals. This feature in their structure, to wit, the permanence and stability secured by a perpetual existence, is extremely valuable, and even essential, because large funds, extensive libraries, and a variety of philosophical and other apparatus, must, beyond what can ordinarily be collected in a single age, be indispensable to any considerable success and

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\* Kent's Commentaries on American Law, Vol. II. p. 218. Angel and Ames on Corporations, pp. 29, 30.

usefulness. In the board of trustees resides the legislative power of the institution. The trustees, too, manage the funds and appoint the faculty. It will hereafter be seen, in what way, and with what qualifications, it is their duty to exercise these important powers. A board of trustees, moreover, selected from various professions, composed of men of eminence, sharing largely of the public confidence, and having a commanding influence with the government and in private society, is generally supposed to command a more extensive patronage for the institution, and to give it a more advantageous connexion with the public, than it could otherwise enjoy.

The inquiry next presents itself, — what is the *Faculty* of a college or university; and what is its constitution in contemplation of law?

The idea of one corporation being engrafted on another, seems to be familiar to the law, and those engraftments on their original corporations, are called, in reference to them, *quasi corporations*. Thus, the supervisors of a county in the state of New York, have been decided to be a corporation for certain special purposes pertaining to the country which they represent.\* So too, the overseers of the poor, and the loan officers of a county, are quasi corporations, invested with corporate powers, limited, indeed, but co-extensive with the duties imposed upon them by statute or by usage.† School districts are included in the same class of corporations. It has been decided by the Supreme Court of Massachusetts, that a school district may sue as a corporation and by its corporate name.‡ “These corporations,” says Chief Justice Parker, “possess by necessary implication, the authority which is requisite to execute the purposes of their creation.”§

Such is the true nature, as I understand it, and constitution of the faculties of our colleges in contemplation of law. They seem to be that “kind of assembly in corporations,” which Mr. Kyd denominates “administrative,” while the boards of trustees comprise the “legislative and electoral assemblies in corporations,” spoken of by the same learned

\* Jackson v. Hartwell, 8 Johnson's Reports, 422.

† 2 Kent's Commentaries, 221.—North Hempstead v. Hempstead, 2 Wendell's Reports, 109.

‡ Angel on Corporations, p. 16.

§ 4th School District v. Wood, 13 Mass. Reports, 192.



author. This view of the rightful constitution of the Faculties of our colleges, is highly important, as it tends to give them the stability and independence essential to the successful discharge of the duties of instruction and discipline, which ought always to be committed to them. The law pertaining to the relation between the trustees and faculty, is scanty and rather indefinite, as the nature of the relation, and the relative positions, rights, duties, privileges and responsibilities of the respective parties, have never, so far as I know, been submitted to judicial examination in this country. It is much to be wished, that the analytical mind of a Mansfield, a Parsons, a Scott, or a Marshall, might be brought to bear on this entire subject.

The adjustment of many questions pertaining to this relation, belongs, it seems, to the person or body of men, in whom the visitatorial power resides. The visitor has a special jurisdiction, and his tribunal is recognised by the law of the land. Lord Mansfield, in commenting upon the convenience of the tribunal of a visitor, says, —“it is a *forum domesticum* calculated to determine *sine strepitu* all disputes that arise within learned bodies. This power being exercised properly and without parade, is of infinite use.”\* A visitor may administer an oath, or require an answer upon oath. He ought always to proceed, whether upon a general visitation, or a particular appeal, summarily, simply, and entirely without the noise and parade of a court, “for herein consists the whole excellence of his tribunal.”†

II. The reason of the thing, and the analogies furnished by the kindred relations, will be found much more instructive on this subject, than the law of the land, which, it seems, has not yet been fully declared and illustrated by our judicial tribunal.

Guided, then, by the reason of the thing, in what position does the faculty of a college naturally stand in reference to the board of trustees? Does the circumstance, that the faculty are appointed by the trustees, of itself place the former in an inferior situation in respect to the latter? Is a faculty naturally subordinate to a board of trustees? If so, in what respects? A correct answer to these questions is highly im-

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\* The King vs the Bishop of Ely, 1 Blackstone's Reports, p. 82.

† Ibid. 7 Pickering's Reports, 303.—Angel and Ames on Corporations, 410—419. Allen vs. Mc Keen, 1 Sumner's Reports, 276.—Auburn Academy vs. Strong, 1 Hopkin's Chancery Reports, 278.

portant to the interests of many literary institutions in the country.

It may be observed, that an act of incorporation is, in all cases, to be regarded as *a means* devised by the legislature, to accomplish some particular *end* or *ends*. A corporation always has reference to something beyond itself. It always looks to the attainment of some *end*, which it was designed to accomplish. The incorporation is of no importance, any further than it serves to secure the desired *end*. This is the nature and essence of all incorporations, and will serve as a key to the right understanding of the powers and privileges, with which the boards of trustees of our literary institutions are invested. They always look to something beyond themselves. Thus, a college is not founded, that it *may be incorporated*, but it is incorporated, that it may the better accomplish the end for which it was founded, — that is, the incorporation is subordinate to *the end* for which the institution was founded. In other and plainer terms, a board of trustees is to be looked upon as *a means* devised by the legislature to accomplish certain *ends*. The chief of these ends, and the end too, in which all the minor objects are included, in the establishment of a college, is, the organization of a learned and effective faculty, qualified to impart such instruction in literature and the sciences as is called for by the wants of the community. Again, the means are always subordinate to the end, and are of themselves comparatively unimportant, except as they serve to accomplish the end designed. To make, then, the faculty of a college subordinate to the trustees, is to reverse the usual order of things, to subvert first principles, to exalt the means above the end, instead of making them subordinate to the accomplishment of the end.

But the argument arising from the nature of the case and the reason of the thing, may be pursued still further. It has before been said, that public opinion, which is much stronger than laws and charters in this country, is accustomed to hold the faculty of a college chiefly responsible for the manner in which it is conducted, — in other terms, for its success or failure. If it is successful, they have the credit; if unsuccessful, the discredit, in like manner, whether deserved or undeserved, falls on them. Now no principle is plainer, than that when a person, (or body of men) is responsible for the issue of any business or enterprise, he ought to be permitted to select his own means, and to appoint his own agents and

associates. This he may rightfully claim, nay, he ought to claim it, and it is but the merest justice to award it to him, in its fullest measure. There is no case to which this principle is more applicable, and with less restriction, than to the case of the faculty of a college in their relation to the board of trustees. For the latter to undertake to advise, and to insist upon directing the former in regard to the instruction and discipline of a college, is completely reversing this well settled principle, as well as the natural and well established order of things.\*

This conclusion obtained by consulting the nature of the relation and the reason of the thing, is amply confirmed by adverting to several kindred cases embraced within the very comprehensive relation of the employer and the person employed. The general principle which governs this familiar relation unquestionably is, that the employer advises, instructs and directs the person employed; but to this, there is a considerable number of well established and familiar exceptions. Whenever the employer engages and pays for, the manual labor, the mere physical strength and the time of the persons employed, he is accustomed to superintend and wholly to *direct* their labors. But in every case, in which *peculiar skill, knowledge and experience* are required in the party employed, he is entitled, in consequence of such peculiar knowledge, skill and experience, to *advise and direct his employer*. This distinction runs through every department of labor, and every profession and pursuit of life. The relation of the lawyer and his client, furnishes a familiar illustration of this distinction. The lawyer, although he is the party employed, advises, and directs his employer, in his own business. The case of the physician and his patient is another of these well established exceptions to the general rule, that the employer instructs and controls the employed. The physician *employed* advises and prescribes for the patient who is his *employer*.

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\* I understand, it is a principle of law as well as of morals, that whenever a man is made responsible for a *result* in the course of business, it is not competent for his employer to *direct* him, in respect to the manner in which he is to *obtain such result*. He is entitled to act upon the dictates of his own judgment and independently of any interference on the part of his employer. Thus, it is stated to me, that the teller of a bank, being strictly responsible for *accurate results* in paying out and receiving money, is not subject to the instruction of his superiors, in regard to the manner in which his part of the business is transacted.

The case of the clergyman and his congregation is another instance of the same distinction, equally familiar and unquestionable. The preacher is always the rightful judge of the doctrines and morals which he is to preach to the congregation which employs him. In like manner and for the same reasons, the faculty of a college, university or other institution of learning, are entitled to advise the board of trustees which employs them, in respect to *the literary department* of the institution. And on the other hand, the trustees are bound in reason and conscience to consult the faculty, to receive their advice, and in all ordinary cases to act upon it, in the discharge of their duties, so far as the same department of the institution is concerned. The successful instruction of a college, and the wise administration of its discipline, require qualifications as high and as peculiar as those which are called into exercise by the classical office, or by the duties of the lawyer and the physician. In truth, it will not be arrogating too much to affirm, that few situations require more skill, knowledge and experience, than the wise administration of the affairs of a college.

If any thing is wanting to confirm this view of the nature of the relation which I am examining, it may be found in the absurd consequences which flow, in abundance, from the doctrine, that the trustees of a college are entitled by virtue of their office, to advise, instruct and direct its faculty in respect to its instruction and the administration of its discipline. I can but touch on this part of the subject. The trustees of our colleges have, with few exceptions, almost no qualifications which peculiarly fit them for the practical administration of those institutions. They are not often selected for their situation, by reason of any peculiar fitness. They consist without much discrimination, of eminent lawyers, clergymen and physicians; successful agriculturists, manufacturers, merchants, and other substantial classes of the community. But assuredly, the qualifications which have given them eminence and success in the professions and branches of business, which it has been their choice to pursue, have imparted to them no peculiar fitness to gain the ascendancy over young men, and to inspire them with the love of virtue, and the enthusiasm of learning. It is too manifest to require argument, that such men, however worthy and excellent they may be, in their personal characters, and however distinguished in the line of their several pursuits and professions, are no more qualified



and entitled to advise and direct a college faculty within their peculiar department, than the client is to advise and direct his lawyer, or the patient his physician.\*

III. I am now prepared to examine this subject by the light of experience, drawn from the history of our colleges and other literary institutions. From a personal experience of more than twenty years, from conversing with a great number of college officers, from perusing all the printed histories of our colleges, and various documents† respecting the administration, I feel justified in considering several particulars fully established.

1. No college in this country has permanently flourished, in which the trustees have not been willing to concede to the faculty, the rank, dignity, honor and influence, which belong essentially to their station. There has been much and just cause of complaint in this particular. Cases have not been very unfrequent, in which the trustees of our colleges have been willing to impose the most burthensome duties upon a faculty, to leave them to struggle unaided amidst every variety of discouragement, and at length, to claim to themselves, all the honor of a wise and successful administration of its affairs. It has not been very unusual, even to call the faculty of a college, "the servants of the trustees;" — but surely such language does not correspond to the nature of the relation, nor to the state of things that ought to exist in a literary institution. "In a literary institution," says a late college officer, "there should be no offices of more honor or dignity than those given to the literary men who are its instructors. They indeed," continues he, "should be the servants of the public, but not of any other body of men." Again, "the reputa-

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\* Every profession and employment of life, has a greater or smaller portion of the *peculiar skill and knowledge* of which I have spoken, and on which I have insisted. But there is this difference. In some professions, the peculiar skill and knowledge which pertain to them, is manifest to all. This is true of law, medicine and the mechanic arts. In other professions, the existence of such peculiar skill and knowledge, though not less real, is much less manifest. The administration of our colleges is an example. But nevertheless, skill in their management, as Lord Coke says of the law, comes from "long studie, often conference, long experience, and continuall observation." (Co. Lit. 232, b.)

† The most instructive and valuable of the documents here referred to, is, "A Narrative of the Embarrassments and Decline of Hamilton College, (N. York) by Henry Davis, D. D. President." The volume contains 158 pages closely printed and in fine type, and a copy of it ought to be in the hands of every trustee of a literary institution in the country.

tion of a college cannot be unappropriated, nor attach itself to the abstract idea of the institution ; it belongs, in the nature of things, to individuals ; and the more clearly and definitely it attaches to certain individuals, the better. But the faculty are marked out by every circumstance as the proper representatives of the college ; with whose offices all the honor due to the institution ought to be associated. No other body of men ought to intervene, to obscure them from public view ; and to take from their offices, the rank, respectability and dignity which should be connected with them. They perform the labor and bear the burthens of the institution, its honors, therefore, in the nature of things, rightfully belong to them.”\*

2. It is a part of the history of our literary institutions, that those colleges have been most flourishing, in which the instruction and discipline have been most exclusively committed to their faculties. This fact, the result of the experience of the country, may be easily explained. “ To render a college in the highest degree prosperous and useful, the first step is, to secure as its instructors, men of the first talents, the soundest learning, the purest morals, and the deepest sense of religion. To this end its offices must be such, that men of the character described will be willing to accept and willing to retain them. They must be offices of dignity and trust, affording to those who hold them, full opportunity of making the best use of their abilities for the good of the institution. Again, the instructors thus secured, must not be subjected, as mere ministerial officers, to the direction of other individuals, who are in comparison, but remotely connected with the college, and imperfectly acquainted with its interests. An institution will flourish then and then only, in the best sense of that term, when such men as have been described are made responsible to the public for its prosperity, and enjoy all the power, dignity and honor, which ought to accompany this responsibility.”†

Instead of this encouraging, this inspiring condition of things, many a faculty of a college, who felt themselves qualified, not only to sustain their institution, but to raise it to usefulness and renown, and gain for it the favor, confidence and patronage of the public, have found all their efforts discour-

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\* See Professor Norton's Speech before the Overseers of Harvard University, p. 17.

† Professor Norton's Speech. Introduction, p. xxii.

aged, embarrassed, and finally defeated by the conduct of their board of trustees. Plans of improvement, after having been matured by much labor and careful consideration, have been presented for acceptance and approbation, only to be retained with coldness and indifference, treated with neglect, and finally rejected, after a hasty examination, for want of a competency to understand them. Favorable times and seasons have been permitted to pass by unimproved, and have been lost never to return, because the faculty had not power to act on the subject, and the trustees could not be induced to seize the favorable moment, and turn the occasion to the benefit of the institution. Under these circumstances, the faculty have been compelled to remain inactive, and let things take their course, or to resign their offices in discouragement and disgust. In either case, the institution has been ruined.

3. It is settled by the experience of our colleges, that whenever the trustees have interfered in the instruction and discipline, they have acted without tact, without address, without knowledge, without firmness, without perseverance, and with such a mixture of rashness and indecision, that they have signally failed. Some amusing as well as instructive cases to this effect might be cited, if the time at my command permitted. "After nearly thirty years *personal* experience," says President Davis, "in the government and discipline of five colleges, this measure" (to wit, interference in the administration of discipline by a committee of the trustees) "was entirely new to me. Motives of delicacy alone prevented me, when it was proposed before the board, from an open and decided resistance to it. I then viewed it, as I ever since have, as a direct and dangerous encroachment upon the appropriate and exclusive province of the faculty; and as tending in no small degree to impair their authority and influence with their pupils. It was too apparent from the appearance of the young gentlemen before the committee, not to be perceived, that they had a similar view of it. For, there was something in their every look, and word, and gesture, which insinuated beyond the power of misapprehension, *you are off your ground; this is the business of the Faculty, not yours.* Never, in any case, have I known the faculty of a college treated with such marked disrespect by scholars, as were the committee on this occasion. Some of the officers, if not all, spoke of it among themselves as a matter of surprise, that gentlemen of their standing should be treated by our young

men with such a palpable want of deference. It was remarked by one of the committee, soon after the commencement of their investigation, 'I am astonished at this insolence ; this spirit must be broken down : ' and it was subsequently remarked by them, ' we must go through with this thing, or the college is ruined.'

"Several of the young gentlemen," continues he, "have, since they were graduated, mentioned to me, as a palliation of their conduct, that the general feeling and sentiment among them was, that the corporation was meddling with that with which, *properly*, they had no *immediate* concern : and they have also remarked, that the proceeding tended much, in the estimation of the thinking part of the students, to weaken and degrade the government of the Faculty. Neither the corporation, nor their committee, it is presumed, intended any such thing. But how could the effect be otherwise ? That such must be the necessary and inevitable tendency of such a measure, cannot, it appears to me, but be perfectly obvious to every man of only common knowledge of human nature, who will for a moment consider the subject.\*"

In truth, how can an interference of this kind prove otherwise than a signal failure ? The trustees are not instructors, they have not, with very few exceptions, the habits of instructors, they are unacquainted with the habits, the dispositions, the prejudices, and the peculiar modes of thinking which prevail among students ; — how can they, then, be successful in dealing with them ? The instruction and discipline of a college are the appropriate business of the faculty, and not of the trustees. Besides, the faculty and not the trustees supply the place, perform the duties, assume the responsibilities, and enjoy the rights of the parents, so far as the education of their sons is concerned. The trustees leave their appropriate sphere of duty, dignity and usefulness, when they interfere with the instruction and discipline of a college. The students, too, are sagacious enough to perceive this, and seldom fail to let trustees know, that in undertaking such an interference, they are out of their proper element, and engaged in a business which they do not understand. There are some remarkable instances of this kind, besides the one mentioned above, among

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\* A narrative of the embarrassments and decline of Hamilton College, by Henry Davis, D. D., President, p. 19.



the records of the difficulties which have existed in our colleges.

4. It is easy, too, for any one practically acquainted with the management of a college, though, perhaps, for no other person, to understand, that any *direct interference* made with a view even *to sustain* a faculty will be injurious to, if not destructive of discipline. I say, all *direct* interference, for *indirect* interference may, under certain circumstances, be useful. For instance, *after* a crisis in the discipline, of more than ordinary difficulty, a resolution approving the measures of the faculty, may be useful. Again, after an investigation into the actual condition of an institution, a resolution founded on the result of the previous inquiry, if favorable, and commending the institution to the public, may serve to invite confidence in its claims to public patronage. But it may be well to sustain the position now under discussion, by authority, as well as by argument.

“Let the trustees of a college,” says President Davis, “only suggest to the scholars (I care not in what way) that the officers, in the opinion of the board, are not able to govern them; that the aid of the board is deemed necessary in enforcing these regulations, and in securing the performance of those duties which are prescribed in the by-laws for the faculty, and although their influence and authority, provided they are discreet men, may not be at an end, yet they are directly and essentially impaired. The father of a family may, with equal wisdom call in his neighbors or the civil magistrate to his aid, in the government of his children. Let this be done, and what becomes of the cordial respect and obedience which are naturally due to every parent? What becomes of his authority?”\*

In this connexion, I take leave to advert to a misapprehension to which I am exposed, and against which I am anxious to guard myself. I have spoken freely of the errors and mistakes into which our boards of trustees have too frequently fallen. In speaking thus freely of them and their mistakes, however, I have not intended to speak reproachfully of them. Far otherwise. I have intended to speak of them with a true respect. Their characters generally entitle them to respect, and their intentions may be presumed to be as upright

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\* A Narrative of the embarrassments and decline of Hamilton college, by Henry Davis, D. D., President, p. 19.

as those of other bodies of respectable and honorable men. The duties which they have been accustomed to perform, have always, I believe, been performed without other reward, than the honor conferred by the station, and the consciousness of doing good. If I am not mistaken in respect to the good motives and good intentions which I have ascribed to them, they will, I am sure, be the last to complain of me for an unreserved expression of my sentiments respecting the important duties with which they are charged. If any good is to come from this discussion, it was indispensable, that the nature of the duties of our boards of trustees, arising from the relation in which they stand to their faculties, should be carefully and candidly inquired into, and that the mistakes into which they have been accustomed to fall, and to which they are always liable, should be fully brought to view. There is no fault in *the construction* of our colleges, — I am convinced they are admirably *constructed*, and they cannot fail to be eminently successful, if the trustees and faculties which are the constituent parts of them, *will study and understand their respective positions and duties*, and, each acting within its rightful and appropriate sphere, *will mutually abstain from encroaching on each other's rights, duties and privileges*. In case of such encroachments, the trustees are most likely to be the aggressors. This tendency to encroachment on the rightful sphere of the faculty, is indeed, the besetting sin into which our boards of trustees have fallen, and to which they are always exposed. They usually consist of men of talents and influence, and such bodies of men are always too apt "to feel might and forget right." They are accustomed to trust in the sufficiency of their own wisdom, and are too much inclined to despise and reject advice of whatever kind. Such mistakes, however much they are to be regretted, may cause the less surprise, as the situation in which our trustees stand, is unknown to the country from which we derive most of our institutions, as well as most of our knowledge.

With the way prepared, as it is, by the preceding discussion, I will conclude by summing up very briefly, what I understand to be the respective duties of a board of trustees and a faculty growing out of the relation in which they stand to one another.

1. To the trustees belongs of right and necessity the original organization of the college under its charter. This docu-

ment is to be the fundamental law of the college, and it usually names the original trustees, and sometimes the faculty. When the faculty are not named in the charter, it is the duty of the board to appoint them. When, however, the faculty has once been filled up, it is the duty of the board, in supplying vacancies, to be governed chiefly by the advice and wishes of the faculty. This is necessary to preserve that harmony among the members of a faculty, without which no literary institution can be successfully conducted. Nothing tends more to disturb this harmony so indispensable to the usefulness of the institution, than the introduction of a member into a faculty, to whose admission the other members are opposed. The adjustment of any disputes and controversies which may arise between members of the faculty is an essential part of the duty of the trustees. The right, too, of assigning to the members of the faculty, their salaries and their respective departments and duties, of instituting an inquiry into the state of the institution, of calling the instructors to account if unfaithful, and of removing them for just and adequate cause, is, from the necessity of the case, vested in them.

2. Again, to the trustees, the right of managing the funds of their institution seems to belong, exclusively of the faculty. For this department of the business of a college, they are ordinarily much better qualified, by their experience in pecuniary affairs, and their knowledge of men and things, than the members of a learned faculty living the secluded life of the professed scholar. Still, even in this department, so far as respects appropriations of money for the enlargement of the library and the increase of the apparatus of the institution, a marked respect ought to be shown for the opinions and wishes of the faculty.

3. It is the duty of the trustees of a literary institution, to sustain the faculty by their countenance and encouragement, to conciliate public confidence and favor towards their institutions, by availing themselves of the opportunities which are continually occurring, to give correct information, to draw attention towards them, to remove unjust prejudices against them, and to use, for their benefit, their personal influence in the various ways in which it may be used, — or in more general terms, to assume the character and act the part of patrons towards them. This is the most dignified and honorable, as well as the most advantageous attitude in which they can

place themselves, in respect to the institution whose interests they have in trust. The countenance, encouragement and influence of a respectable and honorable body of men, such as our boards of trustees usually are, standing in this relation to their institution, shielding it from unjust prejudices, connecting it advantageously, by their intervention, with the public, and conciliating for it general favor and esteem, will be felt, imparting life, spirit and animation to every department. To take an illustration from Holy Writ, such influence and patronage in favor of an institution, is like the descent of the dew of heaven, and of the refreshing rain, upon the dry and thirsty ground.

4. The nature of the relation in which the faculty of a college stands to a board of trustees, makes it the duty of the latter to be governed by the advice of the former, in every case and branch of the collegiate business, which requires for its suitable transaction, the peculiar skill, knowledge and experience, which the faculty alone can, from the nature of the circumstances, be presumed to possess. From this principle many important results immediately flow. Among them are two that are most worthy of attention. 1. That the regulation of the course of study, including the choice of text-books, ought to be committed to the faculty. 2. That the mode of instruction, the discipline of the college, and the internal administration of its affairs, ought to be exclusively committed to them. It may well be admitted, that the suggestions of a respectable body of men, like a board of trustees, especially in their private capacity, may sometimes be useful. But any direct and palpable interference, especially in the instruction and discipline, is beyond their rightful province, and will infallibly ruin the institution. Without a sphere of duty, in which freedom and independence of action are secured to them, no faculty, whatever may be their talents and virtues, can be useful or successful. I repeat, that whenever the measures of an institution are to depend on the peculiar knowledge and experience alone possessed by the faculty, it is as absurd for the trustees to act otherwise than by their advice, as it would be for a patient to reject the advice of his physician and prescribe for himself; or for a client to advise and direct his lawyer in the management of his cause. The patient would be likely to lose his life, and the client his cause, by his rashness and presumption. In the same way, more than one board of trustees has ruined, and every board will



ruin its college, which shall interfere with the province rendered appropriate to the faculty by the peculiar skill, knowledge and experience, which their education, greater attention to the subject, and practical opportunities, have naturally, and as matter of course, given them.\*

I have thus, Gentlemen of the Institute, brought to your notice, the relation, upon the right understanding of which, and the duties growing out of it, I am convinced, the success of our literary institutions essentially depends. As far as I know, it has never before been made the subject of special investigation. It is in some respects, I admit, a dry and uninviting discussion. Still, I hope the Institute will, by reason of its utility, consider me justified, in claiming for it, a share of their attention. Every faculty of a college must, I am sure, be anxious to secure to itself, a more independent and unrestricted sphere of duty, enterprise and usefulness, than those bodies have usually been permitted to enjoy. The subject is worthy, I am persuaded, of still further attention, and of being still further unfolded and elucidated. For, whatever pertains to the success of our universities, colleges, academies, and schools of the learned professions, pertains, it may be said with the most perfect truth, to the vital interests of the country.

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\* It is true, the charters of our colleges generally, if not always, give to the trustees the right of regulating the instruction and discipline. But they ought always to regulate both the one and the other, *through the faculty, and through the faculty only*. They can never exercise this right successfully in any other way. I trust, the true doctrine is gaining ground in this country. "The immediate government of the several departments (of the university) must necessarily be entrusted to their respective faculties. The Regents (trustees) shall have the power to *regulate the course of instruction*, and prescribe, *under the advisement of the professorships*, the books and authorities to be used in the several departments." — Report, (respecting a university) of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Michigan, made to the Legislature, January 5th, 1837, p. 36.

# LECTURE VII.

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SCHOOL REFORM

OR

TEACHERS' SEMINARIES.

BY CHARLES BROOKS.



## SCHOOL REFORM OR TEACHERS' SEMINARIES.

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I AM aware that the whole length and breadth of the subject of extended instruction and school reform — or, in other words, teacher's seminaries — may be summed up in this brief statement ; viz.

If teacher's seminaries should be established by every State in the Union and then properly endowed ; if our young men could be educated in them gratis and afterwards, as teachers, could have the generous and permanent salaries which a fixed profession ought to have ; then, our town schools, through the United States, would meet the deep wants of the republic and the age.

To hasten improvements, which every christian patriot must desire for his country and his home, I proceed to the subject selected for this occasion.

To educate is to form character. The universe, our globe, man, life, truth, art, science, faith, immortality ; in short, everything our minds can know or hope grasp, are means. Man is making his passage through matter. He is here at school, schooling for eternity. He has an interest, an inevitable, positive interest in every moment of the everlasting future. I add therefore to the statement just made : TO EDUCATE IS TO FORM IMMORTAL CHARACTER.

For the child's body God has prepared the best food fitted for every moment of its growth. For every moment of the child's mind he has also prepared the means of growth.



These means are arranged in a naturally ascending series, corresponding to the gradually unfolding powers of the mind ; beginning with those which arrest the eager curiosity of the youngest child, and ending with those which reveal themselves only to the patient analysis of the profound philosopher. To the teacher belongs the duty of applying these in their proper portions their suitable times and their simple forces. If the body has not so much of the natural food as it can well digest, it languishes and is not such a body as God designed. If the mind has not so much of its natural aliment as it can well digest, it languishes, is stunted, and is not such a character as God designed.

The question, then, is, What has God provided for the best nourishment of the young mind? and how should these means of development be applied so that we may realize God's idea of a man?

The answer to these two questions will show two facts: 1st—that our elementary schools do not apply all the provided means: and 2dly—that they never will unless they be furnished with purposely-prepared teachers. Hence the need of teacher's seminaries.

New England does not believe that such seminaries are necessary. It is not apathy but ignorance which is the occasion of this unbelief. Not one voter in ten knows what education is; its difficulties or expense, its principles or its needs. It is ignorant parents and ignorant citizens, therefore, who hang as dead weights upon our wheels. As soon as we can make the community feel the truth of its situation, it will immediately see the indispensable importance of teacher's seminaries.

I honor the schoolmaster and the schoolmistress. No higher office on earth than theirs; and I would labor at the top of my strength for years to have them prepared as they wish to be and paid as they ought to be. No class in the community is so sparingly paid. It is quite time that the fertilizing dew of some surplus revenue should fall on these parched fields. Town-schools are the people's colleges and their teachers should be able professors; and, as such, should be generously supported while they are faithful, and in old age protected against want. In the Duchy of Baden John George Sulger kept a town-school through fifty years. In January 7th, 1836, the city celebrated the jubilee. The Grand Duke sent this literary Spartan a gold medal, and wrote a compli-

mentary letter. The Prefect made an address. Thus virtue and elementary instruction were honored, as they should be, together.

How can we persuade our citizens that teacher's seminaries and tempting salaries are absolutely necessary but by showing that the full and proper application of *all* the means of physical, intellectual and moral culture requires knowledge, skill and principle such as have not been found in town-school teachers and such as cannot be expected under the present system? Yes, we must show parents that their children's souls are half starved every day, and then, and not till then, will they set about providing for them a full meal.

May not the whole subject be embraced in these questions: —

1st. What should an instructor of a town-school be required to teach?

2nd. What traits of character are necessary in a competent instructor?

3d. Do our instructors teach all that should be taught; and are they in qualifications all they should be?

4th. Are teacher's seminaries desirable?

1. What should a town-schoolmaster be required to teach?

Whatever will most fully and rapidly develop the physical, intellectual and moral powers of youth — the capacity of seizing thought being the required extent of culture.

Suppose the divine Saviour, who knew what was in man, could personally educate a child now on the earth. Every part of that child's complex nature would be so nourished by its appropriate exercises and studies as to make him, to the utmost, healthy, intelligent and good; and, of course, useful and happy. These exercises and studies, each in its proper order and due extent, are those which I wish to see introduced into all the schools of the United States.

But this answer to the above question seems too general; and as we have not divine knowledge and wisdom we need spend no time in guessing what these would be, but must proceed according to our dim vision and brief experience to reason from facts beneath our eye and from analogies universally acknowledged.

I place a common high school before me and say that there should be taught in that school;

1. RELIGION; those eternal truths of natural and revealed religion which all sects believe and reverence; barring,

as by statute, all sectarian dogmatics. Religion thus considered should be made the basis of all education.

2. **READING.** It should be confined to what can be understood and felt ; then reading will be, what it should be, soul-reaching conversation. The pupil will read a paragraph from a book as he would speak it without a book. Opinions should be asked on the facts and sentiments of the lesson and their truth familiarly discussed.

3. **SPELLING.** This exercise should always be accompanied with definitions and with conversations on the etymology of words. Sentences should be invented by the teacher, at the moment, illustrating the different forces of the same word.

4. **WRITING.** In this I may include drawing and sketching from nature. Almost every German, Hollandise and Prussian child can sketch a landscape, a machine or a face. His fingers can give out what his eye takes in. Our children, if so instructed, could do the same, and therein save half the time now occupied in torturing the graces of nature.

5. **MUSIC.** Milton in his treatise on education recommends this very earnestly to children. He says, "let them compose their travelled spirits with the solemn harmonies of music, heard or learned ; for, if prophets and wise men are not extremely out, music hath a great power over the manners and dispositions to smooth and make them gentle from rustic harshness and distempered passions." Every German and Prussian child can sing ; some better, some worse. Singing teaches modulations and tones, increases the compass of the voice and prevents consumption. National airs and moral songs sink deep into the soul. They fill the young heart with uncounted wealth ; for there they are in the inmost spirit, lifelong, setting its tone and being within to an eternal voice of action and repose, solace and virtue. The familiar strains of former days not only bring up the lessons of childhood, but wake into life the very accents of our mother.

6. **MATHEMATICS ;** including arithmetic, geometry, trigonometry, stereometry, surveying and algebra. This for aiding intellectual strength stands first among studies. It is inductive as in geometry ; analytic as in algebra. It is a system of close thinking ; the only unerring syllogism. We call that a great intellect which has accuracy and speed, the proper media, rapid combinations and apposite exam-



ples; and whose words geometrically cover his ideas. These qualities belong to mathematics. In this day of rail-roads and land-surveying every American boy should be deeply versed in this science.

7. **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY.** These should go together, particularly as regards the United States — the most important branch. The sketching of maps and making out of historical tables should accompany this study. Lectures, illustrated by paintings, and also by globes three feet in diameter (and such should be furnished by government) are the best means of instruction. I fear that the common modes by recitation are little more than tripping over a catalogue of unfructifying names.

8. **NATURAL HISTORY;** an invaluable study both for the heart and head. Anatomy, zoology, geology and botany are God's demonstrative lessons of wisdom and love; the incarnation of his ideas. His goings forth are in these; they are therefore his preached word. They can be seen, felt, handled, and are on this account vastly easier than grammar for children to understand. They teach mathematics, poetry and religion.

9. **NATURAL PHILOSOPHY.** Similar remarks may be made on this ennobling study, as it embraces chemistry, astronomy, mechanics and optics. "If," says an eloquent writer, "you would study astronomy, study geometry; if you would study anatomy, study mechanics; if you would study the effect of any or all education upon human conduct, study history. From that vantage ground you will see, as the optician discovers, that all colors are necessary to make up the pure white light of day; that all principles of knowledge are but parts of one great and glorious whole." As natural history should be illustrated by dissections and models, so natural philosophy should be by accurate drawings and plain experiments. More real knowledge may be communicated and more positive mental activity brought out by one visible explanation than by a month's delving over mere book descriptions. The great teacher of us all is **NATURE**, which is blooming, attractive and simple; and the great Moral Teacher caught nature's happy mode and taught by analogies and parables.

10. **TECHNOLOGY.** Bigelow's volume on this subject should be simplified for schools. The common things of common life are profound philosophy, and they should have



their rationale explained. There is not a chapter in that book which has not something valuable for boys twelve years old.

11. **POLITICS**, as a branch of moral science, are of primary value in a republic. Every citizen of a free state should know well all that is contained in "Sullivan's Political Class Book."

12. **POLITICAL ECONOMY**. This science, as connecting itself with all the duties, social wants and judgments of common life, is becoming every day more useful to the American citizen, demonstrating to him how the good of each is knit to the good of all.

13. **FOREIGN MODERN LANGUAGES**. In every Prussian high school Latin is taught as required by law, and also some foreign modern language. What leads so directly to the accurate use of words and to certain habits of analysis, as the tracing of parallels in different tongues? Of the 16,000 primitive words in the English language, 6,732 are derived from the Latin; 4,812 from the French; 1,665 from the Saxon; 1,148 from the Greek; 691 from the Dutch, and the other thousand from 24 different languages. Can a teacher, ignorant of all these, be called competent?

14. **LOGICAL EXERCISES**. In other words, *conversation*. In Germany, Holland, Prussia, and, I may now add, France and England, these exercises have risen to the first rank among the true means of elementary culture. Questions for debate (prepared by distinguished scholars) are given out by the teacher to the whole school, and every one says what he thinks and feels. The school law requires that two hours of every day shall be occupied in this trial of mind. Of all means, which I have seen used, it is the most directly efficient in *tempting forth thought* and in *shaping character* — the great desiderata in education. This exercise keeps awake the curiosity, the attention, the judgment and the conscience all at once. In fact it keeps the whole mind of the pupil in a state of positive activity, as opposed to that passive state wherein no pupil learns. In these free and always amicable conflicts, the children get to express themselves with accuracy and ease, and thus in the best way learn grammar in its philosophical form as an analysis of human thought. This I deem a great point gained; for to express ideas clearly and concisely is the "flower of the art of expression," and, like the flower, is apt to attract us to the plant on which it grows.

It is common to institute courts of inquiry on words, as well as on questions of natural history, manners, government and religion. In the schools above mentioned, they are particularly fond of questions where their own souls can be poured forth freely. Self-examination does not seem with them, as with us, a dreaded exposure. The motives for self-discipline and moral action are ably discussed. They analyze consciousness with innocent curiosity, and thus find how to embody in outward acts those pure conceptions which are the joy of their souls. The great principles of Christianity, as illustrated in the character of Jesus, and applied to the community, are perhaps their favorite themes for consultation and remark.

15. **METAPHYSICS.** These can best be taught in connexion with the last mentioned exercise, some branch of them being included in every debateable question.

16. **COMPOSITION AND DECLAMATION.** These should be required once a fortnight ; and where the logical colloquies are used, these follow without any difficulty.

Now, all these topics of study are taught, more or less, in the best town schools of Europe. The masters there can teach, and the children do comprehend them. I intended to have explained them, but time allows me to say but a word upon one — the first in the series — viz. *Religion*.

I think we shall, ere long, acknowledge religion to be the true basis of human culture. It is, in my judgment, to the true system of education, what the Deity is to the true system of the Universe, the all-pervading principle of life.

We want every thing in the school-house which the child will need in the world. We want physiology ; we want the science of intellect ; but, foremost of all, we want psychology, the true science of man.

This is not a new doctrine. It is coeval with God's first lessons. Plato recognised it. The Persians in the time of Cyrus considered the virtues as the main objects of education. In later days Locke brought up the same ideas. In his "Thoughts concerning Education" he has these words. "It is virtue, direct virtue which is the hard and valuable part to be aimed at in education, and not a forward pertness or any little acts of shifting. All other accomplishments and considerations should give way and be postponed to this. This is the solid, substantial good, which tutors should not only read lectures and talk of, but the labor and art of ed-

ucation should furnish the mind with, and fasten there, and never cease till the young man had a true relish of it, and placed his strength, his glory and his pleasure in it." "This," he again adds, "is the main point, and this being had, learning may be had into the bargain."

Milton says, "The end of learning is to repair the ruin of our first parents, by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him, as we may the nearest, by possessing our souls of true virtue, which being united to the heavenly grace of faith, make up the highest perfection."

Lord Kames says, "It appears unaccountable that our teachers generally have directed their instructions to the head, with very little attention to the heart. From Aristotle down to Locke, books without number have been composed for cultivating and improving the understanding; few in proportion for cultivating and improving the affections."

That these principles are practicable, we have only to visit Europe to see them in full credit, playing the first part in the business of elementary instruction. What are the facts? I might quote from pamphlets, recently sent me by their author, describing the schools in Holland; all testifying to the same leading maxims. As a specimen, I will just give you the words of M. Prinsen, one of the ablest superintendents of a teacher's seminary in that country. A few months ago, he said to Mon. Victor Cousin, "The spirit of morality and religion is constantly instilled by all the masters on all occasions. All the masters, we may say, teach morality, but no one teaches it according to any particular communion."

Cousin, with a heart overflowing with zeal in this holy cause, thus recommends the subject to France. "The less we desire our schools to be ecclesiastical, the more ought they to be christian. Religion is in my eyes the best — perhaps the only basis of education. I know something of Europe and never have I seen good schools where the spirit of christian love was wanting. No more than grapes can be gathered from thorns or figs from thistles can any good thing be hoped from schoolmasters who are regardless of religion and morality. I regard religion as a disposition or affection of the soul, which unites man, in all his actions, with God; and he alone is truly religious who possesses this disposition and strives by every means to cherish it. In this view of the subject all morality is religious, because it raises man to God



and teaches him to live in God."....." Popular education ought, therefore, to be religious, that is to say, christian; for, I repeat it, there is no such thing as religion in general; in Europe, and in our days, religion means christianity. Let our popular schools then be christian; let them be so entirely and earnestly."

These are the well considered verdicts of men second to none who have lived or do live. All our colleges teach religion; why, O why is it neglected in the earlier and more susceptible seasons of elementary instruction? I truly hope the time is not far distant when our community will clearly apprehend the fact, that moral teaching produces all other teaching, and is reproduced *in* all others. When this principle is admitted and psychology takes its proper place in elementary instruction, a jubilee should be kept on earth, for I am sure there will be joy in heaven.

To teach all these to the extent of a child's comprehension; to have the first principles of them all carried forward familiarly in the school-house, as we wish to see them carried forward in the world,—*what are necessary?* Do you say a better organization of our school system; a general enlightenment of public opinion and generous pecuniary contributions? I grant it: but all these will do next to nothing without purposely prepared teachers.

Cousin says, "I will never cease to repeat, *as is the master so is the school.*"

How shall I pourtray the American schoolmaster? for, AMERICAN he should be decidedly and completely: I mean the master who is required to communicate the extended instruction required by civilization, liberty and God.

He should be a *whole* man; as perfect a representation of humanity as can exist in mortals. He is to perform the most arduous, delicate and responsible work which can fall to human hands. He is to bend that twig, which, just as it *is* bent, the entire tree will be inclined. He is to lay the first stones in that ever-rising edifice, human character. He is to point the way to inquisitive, trustful immortals, as they start on their endless career. He is to take the young mind, as it were, from the hands of its Creator and continue the process of creation, beginning just where Deity left off. I ask, who is sufficient for these things? To bring out God's idea of a human being as it lies buried in the capabilities of every child in his school, I ask again what teacher is competent? Yet this *is* the edu-



cation which society is henceforth to ask for ; and *we will not be content until we realize this*. Am I wrong in saying that civilization, liberty and God require it ? I think the next generation will write Tekel upon every system that aims lower than this. What therefore must a teacher be, who is qualified to take up this business of creation, and carry forward God's idea in the unfolding and establishment of human, immortal energies ? To say, that he must be himself the manifest of all that he would teach, is the true answer : but, in this answer, O how much is included ! I have time to mention but a few of such qualifications.

1. *The American Teacher should thoroughly understand each and all the branches of study before enumerated.* To teach, one must know. Know what ? The rationale ; the cause and its various relations ; i. e. the science and the facts. This supposes wide and accurate analyses. To analyse is to reason ; to reason is to teach. Now unless a master has sounded the depths and shoals of a subject how can he know what that subject is ? And if he does not comprehend it how can he teach it ? To enunciate a fact or proposition to a child, and withhold the why and wherefore, blunts that native curiosity in which education has its spring, and is like putting stones into the stomach for digestion and nutriment. The master should be particularly ready to lead the superior minds often found in town schools. How fruitful is one truth when fully comprehended ! And is an error less effective ? An error undoubtingly received in early life, in the place of its opposite truth, becomes a standard to which ideas are referred ; a nucleus about which other thoughts form ; a starting point for a thousand streams of reflection. "Mind, like matter, moves in the direction of its impelling force, and if the first impulse be given to it at the wrong point, unless its momentum be resisted and overcome by some opposing power, it will move onward in the path of error and drive along its downward way with accelerated velocity, aided by the gravity of accumulated error, till it finally passes and is lost in dreary space beyond the affinity of centripetal forces."

2. *The teacher should be able to communicate ideas with perspecuity and promptitude.* He must therefore be a metaphysician and a linguist. If he cannot lay an idea in a child's mind exactly as it lies in his own, he has not the requisite tact in teaching. Though such a head be filled with the light of all learning, yet, in school, it is no better than a

dark lantern. To condense and generalise are both indispensable to great skill in varied and profound instruction. If a master possess these qualifications he will often find himself suddenly striking out a forcible and luminous illustration, thus giving a magical attraction to some great truth and thereby riveting it forever in the youthful memory.

I may here speak of *lectures*. We have but slight good now from one of the most fertile sources of instruction. The head of the school should prepare lectures on every subject necessary for the pupil's good progress in after life. The course may consist of fifty lectures, illustrated by experiments and paintings as far as possible, one being delivered each week, the children taking notes, and afterwards be allowed to ask questions and debate. I hesitate not to aver that the half day occupied by this exercise would be an intellectual banquet to the hungry curiosity of the children ten times as nutritive and tasteful as the dry crumbs that now fall from the table of recitation. The introduction of lectures will ere long make an era in the history of school-keeping. In this exercise soul meets soul. Children are all life — and life must meet life.

3. *The teacher should be able to show the practical application of what he teaches.* In this way he makes his school-room a world, his pupils the inhabitants, thereby giving embodiment and realization to principles. The common duties and relationships of life are to be perpetually referred to as the scene of future action; for, if there be certain things which we would have in life we must get them into the school-room. He must know therefore how to bring out the child's feelings and connect them with daily occupations. Never was a proper appeal made to children's feelings in vain.

4. *The teacher should be able to govern his school.* An uncontrolled school, like an uncontrolled army, becomes powerless to its great purposes. I wish the Persian and Spartan philosophy of obedience could be somewhat revived among us. The school sovereign must possess self-discipline. If the children find that he governs himself with decision, uniformity and intelligence, they will readily come under the same principles when applied to themselves. Let him therefore have a soldier's sternness overlaying a lover's good will.

5. *He should be a gentleman.* I mean a self-respecting, honorable man, whose politeness is benevolence reduced to conduct; a man not industrious only but sympathetic; not

gentle only but pure ; not learned only but magnanimous. Such a teacher will not present himself before his pupils as the dispenser of pains and penalties, but as the friend, helper, parent.

6. *The teacher must be a good man.* Children are skilful physiognomists ; ready and able judges of the morality of the affections. They are very likely to copy their instructors. A teacher may often see himself reflected in his scholars. Not the serpent in Eden is to be more feared than a vicious schoolmaster among innocent children. "Feed my lambs," said the soul-loving Saviour ; but this surely does not mean that we should poison them. We must keep them in the kingdom.

7. *The teacher must have enthusiasm ;* and the Greek meaning of this word is GOD IN US. He must catch the divine idea of education and feel a divine solicitude to be a fellow-laborer with God in bringing out the godlike in the human soul. To him falls the sacred office of education, (*educō*,) of drawing humanity out of man, of waking up the dormant powers of mind, of tempting forth the various energies of thought, and of embodying in the heart of childhood his own ideas of the true, the beautiful and the good. Must he not be impassioned ? — What is the *parental* feeling ? It is all feeling, i. e., it is all love and truth and wakefulness, and prayer ; and it is by these principles living and reigning in the soul that the parent wins, corrects, stimulates and rewards the child. Tell me, what can a parent substitute for these in the government of his children ? There are no qualifications which will do instead. Now I ask, if the teacher has not these qualifications, so necessary with children at home, how can he expect success with those children at school ? Is it not supposable that God has assigned to parents the very best principles and modes ? And can any other principles for the culture of their minds and the regulation of their hearts be applied to children effectually by schoolmasters ? Surely not. A teacher therefore should be a perfect parent. A teacher's seminary is specially intended to give to young people parental qualifications. Can there be a wiser aim ? And now I say though a teacher may have all learning and all truth, though he may have intellectual wealth at will, and will to use his wealth, though he may know all the practices of science and trace its multiform relations, yet, if he adds not to these, as the forcing power of the whole,



the bright enthusiasm of his own living spirit, he is nothing — comparatively nothing. The light which he may shed around him will be light from an iceberg.

Do not some think that books can make up for the teacher's deficiencies? Fatal mistake. If they can for his want of knowledge they cannot for his want of enthusiasm. Great and good citizens have bestowed years in preparing books. May God's best blessing rest upon them for it. But I do not put books before teachers. Books are dead instructors. The accomplished master is a living book, aye, *all books at once*. Such a teacher is equal to all the school books that ever were written and he himself into the bargain.

I have thus answered the questions at first proposed, by stating what topics of study are necessary to meet the deep wants of the soul, which are the wants of civilization, liberty and religion. I have also named some of the leading qualifications requisite in a competent American teacher: and now, I ask any man of wide experience, of enlightened patriotism, and of christian piety, if more than one half of the means, appointed by the Creator for the education of children, are applied in the United States; and if that half are applied in all their natural energy and fruitfulness?

The Hon. John Duer, of New York, answers these questions in the following words, — "All who are competent to judge and will give due attention to the facts, must unite in the conclusion, that our present system of popular education is radically defective." An able writer, in a recent number of the American Quarterly Review, says, — "Now we venture to affirm, with great confidence, that the common-school system, as it is called, as at present administered in this country, is emphatically *a failure*; and that not *one in twenty* of the boys and girls, who attend upon it, is educated as the public good, nay, as the *public safety* and his own individual usefulness and happiness require him to be educated." The records of this Institute bear the testimony of many intelligent and experienced men to the same point. Your Committee, appointed to petition the Legislature, last winter, gave in their evidence before the world, in these words — "A very large number of both sexes, who teach the summer and winter schools, are, *to a mournful degree*, wanting in all these qualifications. In short, they knew not *what* to teach, nor *how* to teach, nor *in what spirit* to teach, nor what is the nature of those they un-



dertake *to lead*, nor what they are *themselves* who stand forward to lead them."

If I should name the prevalent error in our school system of instruction, I should say that instruction does not go down into *principles*, into *spirit*, into *nature*; and, of course, cannot show how great natural laws apply to life and usefulness. It has been contented with partial rules and superficial examples. Limited experience and artificial maxims have taken the place of the profound philosophy of human nature. Instruction is signally deficient in touching the master-springs of thought. Throughout the United States we are eminently wedded to mediocrity. Compare a few of our best schools with the rest, and the truth will be apparent to every eye.

The question, then, comes — Is there any thing done in this community for supplying these deficiencies and for elevating the science and art of teaching to its true rank, that of a *profession*? If we except a few recent efforts, we must say that *nothing* has been done which promises better days for the people's colleges. The difference between the accidental, merely money-seeking master, and one whose heart and life are devoted to the business, has never been apprehended by our community. The difference is that between the meteor's random flash and the planet's steady light. I might here hold up before you the half-famished condition of a majority of the elementary schools of New England, and the lamentable incompetency of their masters. But I forbear. Suffice it to say, that our boasting republic is a quarter of a century at least behind the most enlightened monarchies of Europe in its patronage of primary education.

Here we immediately ask — How is this deplorable state of the schools accounted for? I answer, *from their not having purposely prepared teachers*. Such teachers, and such alone, will bring up the schools to answer their proper mission. I am far from believing that the opinion of so humble an individual as myself will have much weight in this vast community; but, as you have invited me here to give it, I now frankly say, that it is my firm conviction, gathered from some observation abroad, and from impartial examinations at home, that nothing short of *Teachers' Seminaries* will furnish competent instructors for all our town schools, — such instructors, I mean, as will bring out all the powers of childhood and arrange them exactly in the educated soul, as God at first imbedded them in the infant constitution.

This opinion is rapidly gaining strength in our community. The Governor of New York, in his last message, recommended the establishment of Teachers' Seminaries ; and a Committee of the Legislature reported the appropriation of \$24,000 annually for their support. In Ohio, the same views are still further advanced. The question has been discussed by the legislators of Pennsylvania, Kentucky and Maryland, and in many places at the South. Massachusetts has not been asleep to it, as the petition of this Institute for such a seminary eloquently evinces. Several large meetings in different counties have recently expressed themselves strongly on this point ; and the Board of Education, this day beginning its labors here, is another proof that the wants of our schools are felt in deep reality. In the report of a Committee to the House of Representatives, 1835, they say — " It is believed by the committee, that an appropriation of the income of the fund to the education to teachers, upon some well devised plan, would do more for the cause of public instruction in this Commonwealth, than almost any innovation on the existing institutions that could well be imagined."

But you ask for testimony from those places where Teachers' Seminaries have been long used and proved. I will select a few only as examples.

Cousin, who has given the whole force of his powerful mind and benevolent heart to the subject, says, in his " Report on Prussian Instruction," thus — " The best plans of instruction cannot be executed except by the instrumentality of good teachers ; and the state has done nothing for popular education, if it does not watch that those who devote themselves to teaching be well prepared." Again he says, — " In order to provide schools with masters, competent and conscientious, the care of their training must not be left to chance. The foundation of Teachers' Seminaries must be continued." He adds — " In each Teacher's Seminary the length of the course should be three years. The first should be devoted to supplemental primary instruction ; the second to specific and more elevated studies, and the third to the practice and occasional experiments in the primary school which should be annexed to every seminary." In his report he frequently says, that the Germans and Prussians believe these seminaries to be the life-blood of the whole school establishment, and then adds with new emphasis, these words, " I shall never cease to repeat, — *as is the master, so is the school.*"

Philosophy and experience establish the truth of this Prussian maxim. Take the best town-school in New England, and put into that school a stupid, selfish, incompetent master, and he will assuredly run it down. Take the most backward school in the state and put into it an intelligent, conscientious, purposely prepared teacher, and he will soon lift it up to himself. All streams flow level with their founts.

But to return to the testimony of Cousin. He has just sent me four pamphlets, which, in the letter accompanying them, he calls fragments of a journey which he took six months ago into Holland, and a full account of which he is just publishing. He says — "This last work will be more useful to Americans than any thing I have yet written on elementary instruction." In Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht, Harlem, he examined the several educational establishments; and the same sentiments appear in every place concerning the indispensable importance of Teachers' Seminaries. He obtained the opinion of the most celebrated philosophers as well as the most successful directors of normal schools, some of them having been thirty years in the service; and these are the words:—"Holland has, by degrees, come to the apprehension of the value of Teachers' Seminaries." Cousin again says, "I place all my hopes for the education of the people in these seminaries." In Holland they judge four years as not too much time for a young man to prepare himself aright for the great duties of schoolmaster. Prussia has forty-two of these institutions. Holland is supplied with them. Austria is introducing them and has between twenty and thirty. France is doing the same, through the influence of Cousin, and will soon have eighty-four. England too is waking up to their value. Having just received from the Secretary of the Borough Rood School in London their Report, I quote from the "Appeal for the annual subscribers in aid of the normal schools, under the care of the British and Foreign School Society." Their words are these — "The importance of teachers being properly trained for the work of instruction is now generally admitted."

Is it not time that this republic, whose safety and renown, we are constantly assured, must depend on knowledge and virtue; is it not time for such a community to provide for the fit education of all its children as well as monarchies and military despotisms do?

Mr. President, I want that something should be *done*.



I want the whole mass of American children to be American ; which means freedom — enamored, intelligent and good. Let us not rest until all are led to dwell upon the high table-land of light, liberty and truth ; and not, as now, be traversing to and fro in the twilight and gloom of the intervale.

Look abroad over this country ! Is there no need that something should be done ? See how the love of money is elevated into a doctrine and preached by fathers to their sons even as a cardinal virtue. Mammon's golden wand is striking the land with spiritual impotency. Then there is infidelity which subverts nature and pulls down providence, and blots out hope ; and then there is licentiousness which is fevering the blood, and intemperance which is maddening the brain, these, with their whole attendant family of ills, are threatening our blood-bought liberties, our national prosperity and our domestic altars ; and where, *where* is the effectual remedy but the school-house ?

What have competent, purposely-prepared teachers done for other places ? I mention one as an example. It may be found in Madam de Stael's "Germany" — and was corroborated by the learned agent from Hamburg recently sent to this country by the king of Prussia, for the purpose of learning the condition and improvements of our schools and prisons, &c. — "In the city of Hamburg taxes are never assessed on individuals ; but the officers announce the amount per cent. on property, which the expenses of the city require ; and then each citizen goes on a certain day and deposits in the public chest what properly falls to his share. No one knows how much another pays ; there is no responsibility but that which is furnished by each man's conscience and sense of honor ; and yet the whole amount deposited never fails to bear the right proportion to the valuation of the city." Bremen is another instance of the same kind. I know many facts proving the same point. Is there moral principle in any of our cities or towns like this ? Have we a *public conscience* in this country which can lift its head in the presence of these facts ? Ask them the cause, and they immediately point you to the religious culture imparted in their elementary schools. I say again, — that our republic needs such schools in order that we may realise such results.

In one word — it is nothing but competent instruction in early life which will give every child the opportunity of mak-



ing the most of himself. What does this mean? A word of explanation and I am done.

The laws of God are co-extensive with himself. They are about man and in man as is the atmosphere he breathes. He acts amid these laws. If he obeys them they make him happy; if he breaks them he must pay the penalty. To obey these laws they must be comprehended; to comprehend them they must be studied; and how can our children study them aright except by the guidance of a teacher; and how can he teach aright except he understand? Let a child be taught understandingly what his physical constitution is; let him be shown the skilful involution of fibres, the wise entanglement of muscles; let him comprehend the action of the heart, stomach and lungs, and feel the blood rolling through the rivers of his frame; and, after this, explain to him the indigestible nature of alcohol, the poisonous action of medicine, the fire-fury of licentiousness; thus enable him clearly to see how folly and vice dislocate and derange the beautiful harmonies of his physical nature, and he will *then* understand that it is just as wise to run into intemperance and lasciviousness in order to promote his pleasure as to break his arm for the sake of amusement. Let him be taught, also, that the laws of mind are equally benignant and demanding in their sphere, that they too are the voice of God within. Let his imagination be taught so to embody his ideal in life and duty as to fill the humblest condition with infinite interests. Let his judgment be called to weigh questions involving the most searching analyses and the most delicate comparisons; and let conscience be enthroned to decide upon cases of moral obligation and actual conduct; in short, let the same mind be in him which was in Christ Jesus; let him come to a clear apprehension of what God wishes a human creature to be, and that in being such a one he will answer on earth the purposes of his existence, he will preserve his health and multiply his powers, he will promote his peace and extend his usefulness; and when he has finished the work that God sent him here to do, he will thus have secured the best prospect of a happy immortality: I say, let the inquisitive mind of a child be thus instructed and established in physical, intellectual and spiritual truth; let him thus understand himself, — what he is, why he is here, where he is going, — and it is not in human nature to deny that that youth will be better

able to begin life's duties, to meet its trials, to enjoy its sweets and to bear its ills, than children now are under our present systems. Yes, such a child would be a well-beloved child of God; and his course may be likened to the revolving earth. His daily duties, performed in punctual obedience to the wise laws of his nature, would be like the noiseless diurnal rotation of the globe on its axis; while, at the same time, he has like the earth another motion, he is speeding his bright way to heaven in his infinite orbit round the great luminous centre of spiritual attraction **THE THRONE OF GOD.**



LECTURE VIII.

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ON

THE TEACHING

OF

COMPOSITION IN SCHOOLS.

By RICHARD GREEN PARKER.



The author of the following lecture deems it due to himself to state, that owing to a misunderstanding, which was his own misfortune, rather than any one's fault, he was not aware that a lecture was expected from him, until two weeks before its delivery. The laborious duties in the large establishment with which he is connected, at a very busy season of the year, allowed him therefore but a short time for its preparation.

## TEACHING OF COMPOSITION IN SCHOOLS.

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THERE are few subjects which pupils even of the brightest parts approach with more reluctance than composition. The same shining face that gleams with such satisfaction when the memory is called upon to yield its hoarded stores, is frequently bathed in tears when the tax of composition is levied; and while the powers of perception and of judgment, of reason and of comparison, of attention, abstraction, association, and analysis, may be called into vigorous and laborious exertion without a sigh of discontent, or a murmur of dissatisfaction, the standard of revolt is raised at the first call upon the inventive powers, and fancy, like a coy maiden, refuses her favors even to the most urgent entreaties.

Why is the task of composition thus loathed and execrated. Is the reason to be sought in the nature or the difficulties of the subject—in the indolence or the dulness of the pupil, or in the want of tact and skill in the teacher? “What man has done, man can do.” The pen runs smoothly and easily in the hands of some. Why should it labor in those of others? Why is not the tithe of the pen rendered as willingly as that of the memory. The answer to these questions is—that the pupil misconceives the idea of composition. He has been familiar with the writings of the learned and the eminent; and he conceives that the productions of his own pen must be ornamented with the same polish and beauty; that the same graces of style and of diction will be demanded from him; and that from the shallows of his own mind, the same valuable ore is expected, as that which proceeds from the depths of a

mature and vigorous understanding. The first step then to be taken in teaching the art of composition is to undeceive him in this respect.

Analogy, although it may be an unsafe ground of reasoning, is a clear and a legitimate mode of *illustration*. Let us then refer to analogy for the explanation of our subject.

Perhaps there is no diversion of which children are more fond than that of imitating Phæton as he drives the steeds of his father Apollo. Let us then suppose a child before us with his rope-yarn reins attached to the arms of another boy whom he is urging, with his eel-skin whip, to the top of his speed. He is delighted with his diversion, and the joyous blood as it mantles his face with the flush of youthful extacy, rushes in healthful flow through his whole system. He has no realizing sense of the mockery of the scene. His fancied horse is as much a horse to him as if his neck were clothed with thunder. Would it be the part of policy or of wisdom, or even of discretion, to say to him that he ought not to indulge himself in such diversions — but that he should husband his strength until chance or fortune puts into his hands the flowing reins of the real courser? Would it not be wiser to encourage his sports with the smile of approbation, and to admire his conscious skill as he fancies his temporary steed prancing in playful gambols or restive under the lash? A word of encouragement and of advice at his pastimes, will be remembered with complacency when his sports are exchanged for realities; and the future exertions of the man, will be influenced and controlled by the failure or success of the efforts of the boy.

In imitation then of his sports let us teach him to apply his inventive powers to the subjects presented to his notice, in the course of the developement of his intellectual powers. He cannot manage the steeds of Apollo — he cannot control the spirited courser on the turf, nor dexterously avoid in a crowded street the obstacles, which on the right hand and on the left array themselves in the course of the rattling wheels. But at a respectful distance, a distance commensurate with his powers, he can imitate the sober employments of the active and the strong — of the old and efficient, — of the learned and the wise; and although his early attempts may be feeble and awkward, and success seem coy and distant, yet it must be remembered that all the attainments of human skill are the re-

sults of small beginnings, and that the wise and venerable were once in the ranks of simple *abecedarians*.

Two difficulties beset the pupil in his first attempts at composition. The first is the want of ideas — the second is that of expressing them properly when obtained. The object of this lecture will be to endeavor to show how he may be aided in surmounting both of these difficulties. These two heads, or divisions, embrace the whole subject of composition, and it will readily be perceived that a single lecture will by no means afford sufficient space for a full or extended explanation of the plan. Much may be said, while much is left to be said on both of these topics. I shall begin by remarking that much which relates to *expression*, belongs peculiarly to the subject of grammar, considered apart from composition; and as that is the province of another, I shall endeavor to confine myself to my own territories without invading the jurisdiction of my neighbors. The correction, therefore, of the errors of syntax, or of orthography, has nothing to do with the present lecture, belonging as it does exclusively to the subject of grammar. But I shall lay claim to such parts of rhetoric, although frequently embraced by some writers under the head of grammar, as belong peculiarly to the subject of composition — such as the whole subject of perspicuity, — purity, propriety, and precision, — clearness, unity, strength, and harmony.

The first step in teaching composition, after having given the pupil to understand the nature of the exercise required of him, is to lead him to *think*. And here the teacher must avail himself of that fundamental principle of the mind called *association*, termed by some writers *the law of suggestion*. If a child were asked to write a sentence, without assistance derived from this source, he would naturally be at a loss what to say. But if the same child were requested to write or repeat a sentence containing a particular word, the word itself by this law of suggestion will suggest an idea — or rather a string of ideas, and his only difficulty will be to select from the number the one which he thinks will prove satisfactory to the teacher.

I will illustrate my meaning by an example. Suppose, for instance, that I have a class around me with their slates in their hands. I request them to write a sentence, original of course, which shall contain the word *industrious*. With little hesitation some would answer — “The bee is busy and industrious.” — “Industrious children accomplish much,” &c. Here



the word suggests an idea, and from the idea, thus obtained, by the same law of association or suggestion, others will arise; and the skilful teacher may draw from his attentive listeners, in a short time, an exercise, at the length of which, both he and they will be surprised.

After this first step has been taken, it may with advantage be followed by a similar one, in which several words are required to be incorporated in the same sentence. The *words* will suggest the ideas as before, and as these ideas will necessarily be complex, another advance is made in the progress of thought, the interested listener will begin to perceive that there is not so much inherent difficulty in the subject of composition, as he at first supposed, and the progress he has made with so little exertion, will stimulate him with a fondness for the exercise which he at first so much dreaded.

These exercises will be profitably followed by others of a like character — such as the incorporation of phrases in sentences, or the requisition to make sense of sentences from which some of the principal words have been purposely taken. I must here illustrate my meaning by an example. I give my little listeners the following sentence, or rather parts of a sentence, with the direction to fill it up in such a manner as to complete the sense.

“His father was ——— to ——— his request.” Here it will be seen that other words must be substituted for the blanks, and they may be supplied in different ways. Thus: his father was *induced* to *grant* his request, — or his father was *compelled* to *deny* his request, &c.

This exercise will prepare the way for another not less useful, founded on the similar meanings of dissimilar terms, — or in other words, it will serve as an introduction to *synonymes*. Thus in the sentence. His father was *compelled* to *deny* his request — if the pupil is taught that the words *obliged*, *constrained*, *compelled*, *forced*, &c., have a similar meaning in the sentence, he is led to *think* what other words may be substituted in other sentences for those which he has used — and this exercise of his mind will introduce him to variety of expression, and lead him by gradual stages to a discrimination of the strength, the beauty, the clearness and harmony of phrases. As he is thus led to *think* — and as the law of association or suggestion forbids the entrance of a solitary and unattended idea to the mind, the difficulty which the pupil at first encountered, in obtaining ideas, gives way to another, and

that is the difficulty of *selection*. The entire removal of this perplexity is reserved for the later stages of his progress when the subject of *unity* is considered.

Another exercise of different character, but of the same tendency, as it leads to the formation of ideas, is presented in lessons on objects. The pupils with their slates in their hands, stand prepared to record the result of their observations. Some sensible object being then presented, the powers of perception and comparison are to be called into action by an exercise somewhat like the following :—suppose a piece of sponge to be the object ; and the teacher calls the attention of the class to the fact that it is not wholly solid, but apparently full of small holes or interstices — he calls this a quality of the sponge and applies to it the name *porous*. He then desires them to notice the property it possesses of containing water, — for this quality he seeks a name and terms it *absorbent*. These terms are then written upon the slate, and by a similar process of explanation he develops its other qualities and properties, under the names of *soft, tough, opaque, elastic, dull, flexible, indurable, insoluble* and *infusible*. The class of ideas thus developed, by the same law of association or suggestion, will introduce others of similar character, and gradually prepare the way for a careful analysis of objects ; thus enabling the pupil to describe the subjects of his perceptions, and to reason upon them.

Lessons on objects may be succeeded by lessons on *words*. The qualities discovered in objects have been described by words of different meanings, but having, many of them, the same termination. Thus in the terms applied to the qualities of the sponge, the words *flexible, durable, insoluble, infusible, &c.* occur. From the explanation of the qualities, he readily gathers the meaning of the termination, *b, l, e*, and this will serve as a proper introduction to that part of etymology which relates to derivation ; with the knowledge of the prefixes and suffixes of the language. This exercise, although perhaps a little too difficult for this stage of the pupil's progress, is a very important one, and should by no means be omitted, although it may with advantage be postponed.

As the preceding exercises have prepared the pupil for the operation of analysis, his attention may next be called to the parts of which a sensible object is composed. A book is the most simple and the nearest which is at hand. He may be desired to record on his slate the parts of which it is com-

posed — such as the outside, the inside, the edges, corners, binding, paper, back, sides, top, bottom, title-page, preface, introduction, contents, beginning, end, leaves, pages, margin, type-letters, numbers, stops, words, sentences, syllables, title, lettering, stitching, lines, &c. This enumeration of the parts, may be followed by an enumeration of the qualities of each ; — their origin, whether natural or artificial, the difference between animal, mineral and vegetable productions, — the substance of which each part is composed — whether it was manufactured at home or abroad, — if made in a foreign country, how did we procure it — the meaning of importing and exporting, — the name given to this interchange of productions — the effects of trade and commerce — the names of those who carry it on — their motives — the various trades and occupations of mankind — the arts, especially those of ship-building and navigation.

Thus from a simple and single object at hand, the skilful teacher, with the aid of a few explanations and suggestions, can fill the minds of his attentive listeners with such a flow of rapid and successive thoughts, that little difficulty will be found in the performance of the exercise, to which all that has preceded is to be considered as merely introductory.

And this exercise is the first where the pupil may be left to himself, to perform it in the retirement of his closet. Neither the slate, the black board, or paper, are indispensable in the performance of all that has gone before, although in all cases a decided preference is given for a written exercise. The object of all the preceding exercises is to lead the pupil *to think* ; and thus to overcome the first and principal difficulty in the task of composition.

The pupil having been led by the careful analysis of the parts of a sensible object to understand its nature and design, may now be employed in definitions. Of all sorts of writing this is the most difficult ; and yet it is one which in this stage of his progress it will be very useful for him to attempt ; in order to assist himself in the formation of correct ideas. It is not to be expected that he will be able to write a correct, philosophical definition, even of the simplest object. The design of the exercise is to practice him in the operations of combinations and comparison. If he be tolerably successful in his attempt, and be able also to trace the distinction or difference of objects, he may then proceed to a higher grade in his



course — the second one designed for his closet, and which may be known by the name of *description*.

The want of correct habits of observation frequently renders it difficult for the pupil to write a correct description. The practice of the preceding lessons has probably enabled him to *think*, and has suggested many ideas with regard to the object which he is required to describe. He is therefore at a loss how to approach the subject, where to begin, and what particulars to enumerate. It is here that the teacher is particularly called upon, to render him efficient aid in the arrangement and classification of his ideas. This can be done in a variety of ways — but especially by an enumeration of certain heads, or list of particulars, which must be noticed in the description. Thus, let us suppose that the pupil is directed to describe a sensible object. That object undoubtedly suggests many ideas to his mind — but his difficulty lies in making a selection. If the teacher will but lead his mind to some particular *point*, his difficulty will vanish. Suppose then that the teacher, should direct him in his composition to notice the following particulars :

1. The time when, and place where the object to be described exists, or was seen.
2. The purpose for which it was designed, — its name, uses and conveniences.
3. Its origin — its novelty or antiquity — that is, whether it be new or old — whether it be a new invention or whether it was known to the ancients.
4. Its general or particular existence, — that is, whether it be confined to one spot, and be the only one of its kind, or whether it be one of a genus or species, and may be found in a variety of places and situations.
5. Its figure, or form, and its position.
6. An analysis of its parts.
7. The materials of which it was made, and the manner in which it was constructed.
8. The persons or artists by whom it was made.
9. Its resemblance to any other object.
10. Its effects on mankind by increasing or abridging their comforts and conveniences, &c.
11. The feelings or reflections which it excited.
12. Its connexion with any other subject.

Such a list of particulars, viewed in relation to *any* object cannot fail to suggest a long train of thoughts and ideas, so



that the whole difficulty which seemed so effectually to embarrass the pupil at his onset, will be entirely removed. I would not be understood to recommend that the whole of this list of particulars should be embraced in any composition; — nor would I advise that the pupil should be confined to any particular order in their consideration. Any order, consistent with a proper classification, may be allowed at first; and when the learner has advanced to that stage of his progress when it will be proper that he should learn the rules of clearness, *unity*, strength, and harmony, it will be early enough for him to be required to exercise his taste and his judgment in the selection of the particulars which are to enter into his description.

The list of heads which has now been suggested as sources from whence he may obtain ideas, refers especially to a limited number of individual, sensible objects. Other lists may readily be made which will embrace every variety of subject. Thus, for instance, if the pupil be required to write a description of natural scenery, a list like the following, will be more applicable.

1. The climate, weather, surface, soil, &c.
2. The progress of vegetation with its kind;
3. The state of cultivation, — whether it has been improved by art, or left to the spontaneous operations of nature.
4. The animated objects in the vicinity, together with the conveniences or inconveniences of their situation.
5. The improvements in the scene made by human industry.
6. The beauty or deformity discoverable in the uncultivated parts of the scene.
7. The inhabitants in the vicinity, their occupations, manners, state of civilization and general character.
8. The prospects around the scene, whether hill or valley — the streams by which it is watered, — the water whether stagnant or running, slow or rapid.

The glassy smoothness of the lake

“ With its crystal face;  
The mirror where the stars and mountains view  
The stillness of their aspect in each trace  
Its clear depth yields of their far height and hue.”

And then there are the sublime appendages of mountain

scenery, with *night*, and *storm*, and *darkness*, and the *live thunder*, leaping

“Far along,  
From peak to peak, the rattling crags among” — Then  
“The lit lake ——— a phosphoric sea ;  
And the big rain ——— dancing to the earth !”

9. The distant prospect, adorned with trees and steeples and other prominent objects ; or perhaps, if a valley, the impenetrable wall of rock, or forests, or mountain, which bounds the view — and then there is

“The negligently grand ; the fruitful bloom  
Of coming ripeness ; the white city’s sheen ;  
The rolling stream ; the precipice’s gloom ;  
The forest’s growth ; and Gothic walls between ;  
The wild rocks, shaped as they had turrets been,  
In mockery of man’s art ; and there withal  
A race of faces, happy as the scene,  
Whose fertile bounties here extend to all :”

10. The sounds produced by natural objects ; such as a brook or a waterfall — or perhaps the sublime roar of the ocean — the shore lashed by the surges — the breeze curling the wave, or whistling through the trees ; — or more domestic in its character, the sounds proceeding from animated nature ; the bleating, namely, of the sheep — the lowing of the cattle — the singing of the birds — the cottage cur — the whistling of the ploughman — the tripping milk-maid as she sings — “the rustling corn,” — the “whirring wing” and in fine,

“All that the genial ray of morning gilds  
And all that echoes to the song of even ;  
All that the mountain’s sheltering bosom shields  
And all the dread magnificence of heaven.”

11. Then there is

“The hum  
Of Industry, the rattling hammer’s sound ;  
Files whizzing, creaking sluices, echoed  
On the fast travelling breeze.”

In addition to these particulars, many may be embraced which have already been noticed in connexion with the description of a sensible object, — such as the time, place, figure, form, analysis, &c. together with the feelings or reflections which naturally arise from the scene, and the connex-

ion which analogy establishes between this and any other object.

It is to be borne in mind that the design of this list of particulars is not so much to aid the pupil in the actual performance of his exercise, as to suggest to him the proper manner of viewing his subject, and to assist him in the study of it. The help thus afforded by the teacher in furnishing such a list of particulars will lead him to *think* — and by the same law of association or suggestion, to which I have already more than once referred, it will supply him with such a copious flow of ideas that his difficulty will now be, as I before stated, in the selection.

Again, let us suppose the subject of a description to be written, be a *person*. Few of the particulars in the lists already presented, will here apply. The following suggestions will be more appropriate.

1. The physical appearance, stature tall or short — thin or fleshy, symmetrical or deformed.

2. The manner of the individual, whether graceful or awkward, strong or feeble, — active and energetic — or indolent and wanting in energy, — his gait, whether slow or rapid, &c.

3. His behavior and general character, whether good, bad, or indifferent.

4. His disposition — whether amiable or irritable.

5. His habits — whether temperate or otherwise — his principles whether fixed and steady, or vacillating and irresolute.

6. His profession or occupation — station in society — riches or poverty — birth, parentage, residence, age, education, associates, — his likes and dislikes — his aims, or objects of pursuit.

7. The character of his mind — his talents, memory, discrimination, judgment, language and expressions, &c.

Such lists of particulars may be easily made by any teacher, or he may find books in which they are contained, suitable to be put into the hands of the pupil. But the teacher must take especial pains that the pupil may understand the design in furnishing him with this list — namely, that it is *to suggest ideas — not to supply their place*.

Every exercise required of a pupil must be proportioned to the age, talents, and attainments of the child. In order to facilitate the performance of the exercise which I have now

described, it may be necessary in some cases to add to the list of particulars above mentioned, a list of words to be incorporated in the exercise, on the principle of the lesson first recommended. I will illustrate my meaning by an example. Suppose for instance that I were to require the pupil to describe the appearance of a landscape — and to assist him in the performance of his task, I should not only give him, in a printed form, the above-mentioned list of particulars to be embraced in the description of natural scenery — but should also further aid him by suggesting a number of words to be incorporated in the performance. And further, let us suppose these words to be something like the following, giving him leave at the same time to substitute a synonyme for any one of them.

Delightful — month — gilded — fearing the heat — The cattle — slaked — browsing — labors in the field — lovely day —. But suddenly — began to — look dark — darted through the sky — rolled — artillery — spread — on all around.

These words, assisted by the list above mentioned, would perhaps suggest a description like the following :

“ It was a *delightful* morning in the *month* of June. The sun rising above the horizon had *gilded* the tops of the trees. The birds *fearing the heat* had assembled in the shade. The cattle having *slaked* their thirst in the pool, were *browsing* on the plain : the peasant had commenced his *labors in the field*. All things seemed to give promise of a *lovely day*. *But suddenly* the clouds *began to rise* — the heavens began to *look dark*, — the lightning *darted through the sky* — the thunder *rolled* — and a noise, as if all the *artillery* of heaven was discharged at once, *spread* fear and consternation *on all around*.”

By such suggestions, the pupil may be led to regard the subject of composition with very different feelings from those which he entertained when he at first addressed himself to it. His mind becomes expanded, and by slow, and perhaps insensible degrees, he overcomes the obstacles in his progress ; his intellectual powers, as they are severally exerted, acquire strength and activity, and the whole object of the business of education is effectually secured. Mr. Jardine, in his work entitled the “ Outlines of a Philosophical Education,” says, “ The skill, experience, and prudence of the teacher, are essentially necessary to success in this part of the business. He must exact from the pupil nothing more than may he rea-



sonably expected from the actual state of his intellectual powers and previous attainments. The first exercises should be such as require less labor and exertion, than those which are to succeed them ; but even these must demand such a degree of exertion, as will call into action all the powers of the student, and carry him forward to the next step in his progress to higher attainments. That burden which the laborer, by gradually increasing efforts, may become able to support, would completely overpower him, when he made his first efforts." "He that begins," says Mr. Locke, "with the calf may carry the ox ; — but he that will go at first to take up the ox, may so disable himself, as not to be able to lift the calf after that." When the mind has brought itself to attention and close thinking, it must be able to cope with difficulties, and master them without any prejudice to itself, and then it may go on readily." Still, as Mr. Locke elsewhere observes, "*Quid valeant humeri, quid ferre recūsent,*" must be made the measure of every man's understanding, who has a desire not only to perform well, but to keep up the vigor of his faculties, and not to baulk his understanding by what is too hard for it. The mind by being engaged in a task beyond its strength, like the body strained by lifting a weight too heavy, has often its force broken, and thereby gets an inaptness or an aversion to any vigorous attempt ever afterwards. In the same essay, he observes that too easy tasks are equally hurtful. "He that has for some time accustomed himself to take up what easily offers itself at first view, has reason to fear, he shall never reconcile himself to the fatigue of turning and tumbling things in his mind to discover their more retired and more valuable secrets."

Lord Bacon, whom Pope describes so happily and justly in one line, as

"The wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind,"

—in whose works every teacher will find much to learn, expresses the same views. "The task," says he, "must be as exactly as possible, accommodated to the capacity and knowledge of the student ; and should require neither more nor less than he can give. Too great a burden might depress those who have little courage ; and a burden too easy might lead them to place such confidence in their own capacity, as both to repress their ardor, and to obstruct the progress of their studies."

The business of education is not merely to store the mind with useful information ; but also to enable it to work with the materials which it has acquired — and thereby to strengthen its powers, — to invigorate its growth — to develop its faculties, — to give them a force and freedom of action in the day of small things, which shall enable them to cope with the difficulties which may arise in the broad theatre of the world, when the whole man must assume its panoply and be “ready against *assail* of troubles, by opposing to end them.” A good net is worth more to the fisherman than a whole freight of the finny herds of the lower deep, — or, as the same idea has been better expressed by others, “a tree is more valuable than a basket of fruit, and a good hawk better than a bag full of game.” The analogy is readily perceived, as I transfer these homely adages to the mind ; — for who will not readily allow that the possession of faculties strengthened by use, of powers matured by action, of an intellect enlarged and expanded by exertion, is more valuable to their owner, than a mind stocked and stored with the lumber of lore — a mere warehouse of facts, piled heap on heap in disorder and confusion. The sea which has no outlet may be swollen with the accession of a thousand tributary streams, — but its miserly hoarding of its waters, gives it no title to the gratitude of mankind, for wafting from clime to clime the blessings of commerce, — the interchange of reciprocal conveniences from the domains of equatorial day, to those of polar night, — or the diffusion of the charities of life among those remote regions, which although widely separated by nature, have been knit into brotherly union by art and science. It is so with the human mind. Like the sea with no outlet, it may be constantly receiving accessions from a thousand sources, — the streams of knowledge may be pouring into it in rich profusion, yet unless its hoarded wealth of wisdom finds some channel by which to benefit mankind, it resembles more those reservoirs which pollute the air, and teem with foul corruption.

And how shall that mind diffuse its wealth, that cannot discharge its constantly increasing accessions of fact and fancy through the strains of the orator, the numbers of the poet, or the pages of the ready writer. Let us not, then, in our attempts to cultivate the mind, let us not imitate the phlegmatic Hollander, whose resources are expended in the construction of prodigious *dykes*, within which the beauties of nature and of art may teem with rich profusion ; but rather let

us emulate his richer neighbor, whose means and whose powers are strenuously devoted to the construction of those facilities, by which the blessings of an honest commerce may be borne on every wave and be waisted by every gale.

The human mind is not a mere store-house. The figure, though less elegant, is more just that describes it as a workshop, and the intellectual faculties as the operatives. Materials, it is true, must be stored there, which those skilful artisans, intuitively taught, must be engaged in moulding and fashioning, — but great care must be taken that these materials be neither carelessly stowed, nor inconveniently arranged, so as to obstruct the free motions of the laborers within. In other words, the cultivation of the mind consists in furnishing its various powers with opportunities for separate and united action; and thus enabling it to lean upon itself, rather than to be dependent upon others for its thoughts, its feelings and its opinions. To combine and to compare, to reason and to judge, to perceive and to discriminate, are as needful and as laborious duties of the faculties, as to discover and to acquire. Of all the duties required of the intellectual powers, the task of composition is the most important, and interesting; because it subserves the whole purpose of education, by calling each into both separate and united action.

But I have been drawn, from the unity of my subject, by the more fanciful occupation — the tracing of analogies. The digression is not however altogether irrelevant, as its object is to show the importance of my theme.

The next step to be taken by the pupil is an attempt at narration. A short story or tale having been read to the class, an outline may be furnished, to assist them in writing the story in their own words. This method is particularly described in Walker's *Teacher's Assistant*, — one of the very few works of transatlantic origin, calculated or designed to aid the pupil in his early attempts in composition. It is from the work of Mr. Walker, that this principle was copied into the "*Progressive Exercises in English Composition*," a volume prepared by your lecturer about five years ago, which contains many of the principles to which allusion has been made, or remains to be made in this lecture. This volume, I may here remark, is to be followed by a sequel, designed to treat of the subject in its higher departments, as well as to supply many deficiencies, and remedy some defects which the



haste, and the circumstances in which it was prepared, rendered unavoidable.

Narration *with* an outline, may be followed by a similar exercise *without* such assistance ; and this, in its turn, may be succeeded by an amplified narration ; in which the pupil shall be required to draw upon his imagination or inventive powers. To aid him in the performance, he may, as in description, be aided by the suggestion of a list of particulars, some, or all of which are to be noticed in his written exercise, — such for instance, as a description of the place or scene of the actions related, a notice of the persons concerned in the narration, the time, postures, state of mind, associations or trains of thought, &c., of the circumstances and the individuals mentioned. An additional list of particulars will enable him to present his exercise in a still more amplified form.

Again, the facts to be embraced in a narration, may be given to the pupil in the form of detached sentences, from which he may be required to write a connected narrative. Whether all these varieties of exercise should be embraced in a regular and progressive course, must depend upon circumstances of which the teacher himself will be the better judge. But another step which I would by no means have omitted, is the formal union of narration and description in one and the same exercise. Such a task will serve as a proper introduction to didactic composition ; and the pupil may here likewise be aided by the suggestion of a few simple directions in the form of heads or divisions of his subject. Thus for instance, if he were required to write narration and description in a composition. “On the public games of Greece,” the following list of particulars would materially aid him in directing his thoughts to the subject.

Their origin — their nature, or in what they consisted — the places where they were celebrated, — the obligations of the candidates for the prizes — the rewards bestowed upon the victors — the estimation in which these honors were held, — the station, character and profession of the candidates — the character of the assembled spectators, — the effects of these games upon the victors, and the nation by encouraging athletic exercises, and a spirit of emulation — the probable effects of the institution of similar games at the present day, &c.

At this stage of his progress, the pupil, who has been well exercised in the preceding principles, will find little difficulty



in the production of a respectable performance — destitute perhaps of the graces of style and the ornaments of diction — but still indicative of intellectual advancement. Frequency of composition is especially recommended at this time. The action which is seldom performed is never converted into habit ; and it is very important to call the aid of that singular power, which, by the constitution of human nature, often relieves the tediousness of exertion, and the irksomeness of unpleasant employment. The mind is no less under the influence of habit than the body ; and its several powers are as easily trained to the habitual exertion of any assigned operation as are the different organs of the body. The inventive powers require the same improvement from exercise, as do the memory, and the powers of reason and comparison. The teacher, therefore, who fails to call for this exercise *frequently*, and *statedly*, neglects the advantages which are to be derived from the power of habit, in the application, and exercise of the intellectual faculties.

Every teacher who aims at the faithful discharge of duty, must study the nature and the character of each of the individual powers of the mind. He must not confine his labors to the developement and improvement of any one single faculty. He must study the elements of general intellectual culture ; — he must aim at the improvement of *perception* through the medium of the organs of sense, — he must strengthen the faculty of *attention* by practice in the study and consideration of abstract subjects, — he must exercise the *memory* by entrusting the treasures of fact and principle to its charge ; — he must cultivate the *imagination*, by theory and suggestion — he must improve the powers of *judgment* and *reasoning*, by the labors of their kindred faculties of *invention* and *comparison*, he must extend the principle of *association*, so that it will embrace the remotest degrees of *analysis* and *analogy* ; he must exercise the powers of *reflection*, so that its eagle gaze will penetrate the very essence of things, — and in fine, like the goddess of wisdom to the favored son of Ulysses, he must be the mentor to genius. In no branch of intellectual culture generally embraced in a common, or even in a liberal education, will these high and noble objects be more effectually secured than in the department of *composition*.

The time will fail me, I fear, if I attempt to extend these suggestions to the length which I originally designed. I feel

as if I were on the summit of a lofty eminence, with such a profusion of fruits, of blossoms and of flowers around me, that my eye is satiated with the luxuriance of vegetation. If I point the inquiring stranger to one path he is attracted from that direction to another, which seems "to wave its shades as signs of invitation." If I point to this prospect, or that cascade, his wandering eye is averted to admire the sturdy proportions of the mountain monarch, or the delicacy of the verdure that springs beneath his feet; — while as I cast my own admiring glances through the distant vista, the eminence on which I fancied myself, shrinks to a pigmy hillock, and the summit of the farthest mountain I could thence discern, but the base of another, — and thus in the expressive language of the poet,

"Hills peep o'er hills, and Alps on Alps arise."

I have now suggested to your notice the principal steps by which I would lead the pupil, progressively from the simplest expression of a simple thought, to that higher department of composition, known by the name of didactic writing. And here too I would retain the service of that important principle of association or suggestion, which has rendered such efficient aid in smoothing the path and beautifying the progress of the little traveller in the former part of his journey. It is manifest that the directions which are applicable to descriptive and narrative writing, are wholly inappropriate to moral or didactic composition. The pupil, aware of the difference, if left to himself, would naturally endeavor to find some book which treats of his subject, and become a plagiarist without "adorning his thefts or polishing the diamonds which he has stolen." But it is the business of the teacher to show him that there is a nearer and more fertile source which will furnish him with materials, if he will take the trouble to search — and that source is his own mind, working on the materials which it already possesses. The manner in which these materials may be obtained, will be presently explained. And,

1. Before taking up his pen to write, he must be directed to think for some time on the subject — beginning by fixing in his mind its exact meaning; — removing every thing that is doubtful or equivocal in its signification, and when difficulties of that kind occur, determining the true import of the word

by its etymology or derivation, and by the manner in which it is used by good writers.

2. Having determined the true meaning of his subject, the next step to be taken, is to ascertain its necessary, or accidental qualities. This may generally be done by an *analysis*. Having ascertained these qualities, they should be considered according to their order or their importance, with a reference both to the general and the particular effects of each.

3. The qualities of the subject having been ascertained, together with their effects upon general or particular objects, a comparison is easily drawn between this and some other subject; and such comparison will readily furnish hints for an antithesis. The antithesis will serve to present the subject in stronger light, and remove the ambiguity, which may exist in any parts of the explanation.

4. A consideration of what has been gained to the world by the influence or operation of the subject, or what the world would have lost or wanted, had the subject no existence, will suggest further ideas which may properly be introduced into the exercise.

5. These reflections will enable the writer to determine with accuracy, whether the subject be good and commendable, or bad and deprecable, and from what its excellence, or inferiority respectively proceeds.

6. If the writer have any acquaintance with history and geography, he may consider, likewise, its connexion with the manners and customs of different nations, both of ancient and modern times; its prevalence at any period or in any particular portion of the world; and the ranks in society where it especially prevails.

These considerations and reflections form what may be called the *study of the subject*; and should be made before the writer takes up his pen to record a single idea. Each and all of them, by that fundamental law of association, will suggest other ideas, which will not come alone; and the pupil's first difficulty in ascertaining *what to say*, will probably be succeeded by the opposite difficulty — namely, that of determining *what to omit*.

It is exactly at this time, that the knowledge of the laws or rules of *unity* should be acquired, and they should be considered in reference not to a single sentence only — but to the whole exercise. These laws or rules are four in number; but



they may all be included in the homely and familiar adage — more easily remembered,

“Stick to the point.”

I have as yet made no mention of the rules of clearness, strength, and harmony ; as you recollect that in the beginning of this lecture, I proposed to consider first how the pupil's principal difficulty may be removed — namely, the *want* of ideas. For the same reason I have purposely omitted many other topics, which, in a progressive course, should be previously embraced — such for instance as variety of expression — the methods of transposition and inversion of sentences, variety in arrangement, — the analysis of compound sentences — the synthesis of simple ones, together with the whole subject of figurative language, — that mode of expression which lends to poetry all its charms, and to wit half of its attraction. But as I may not have opportunity, in the course of this lecture, to embrace, as I at first intended, a general view of those subjects, I stop here to remark that by the aid of the same principle of association to which I have so frequently alluded, almost to weariness, the pupil may be taught with the assistance of a few models and some simple suggestions, to change plain into figurative language ; and thus adorn his writings with the graces and elegancies of diction. If his ideas are at first clad in tawdry dress, it will evince a love of ornament which may, by and by perhaps, by the aid of taste and judgment, be converted into a fondness for chastened beauty. The child, in early life is pleased with curls and ribbons — but the matured taste of the matron is displayed in pearls and costly jewels.

As this method of acquiring the elegancies of diction is new, and was, so far as I know, original in the “Progressive Exercises in English Composition,” I will illustrate it by an example.

I begin, then, by teaching the pupil the nature of figurative language, presenting to him the same thought, clothed both in plain and metaphorical costume. Borrowing an idea from that sublime apostrophe to the sun, from the pen of one of our gifted countrymen, I strip it of its beautiful dress and present it thus in its naked simplicity.

“Thou shinest on the waters, and they grow warm, and ascend in vapor till they reach the upper air.”



I then array it in its divested ornaments, and present it again to the admiring listener, who scarcely at first recognises the same idea in that beautiful expression of Percival,

“Thou lookest on the waters and they glow  
And take them wings, and spring aloft in air  
And change to clouds,” &c.

Other examples of a similar nature are given thus. We say in plain language, “Our misfortunes soon end, and we are favored by prosperity.” The same idea is presented in a figure thus: “The clouds of adversity soon pass away, and are succeeded by the sunshine of prosperity.”

Again. “The waters falling from the rocks, made a pleasing noise which I distinctly heard.” How much more life is there in the expression, “I heard the voice of the waters, as they merrily danced from rock to rock.”

Again: “The water of the lake was motionless.” The figure presents it in a beautiful picture. “The waves were asleep on the bosom of the lake.”

Once more. “The grass grows in the meadows in the spring, and summer soon succeeds.”

More beautiful as well as more lively is the figure which expresses it thus: “In the spring of the year, the meadows clothe themselves in their beautiful green robes, to welcome the approach of summer.”

After the pupil, by such explanations, has become familiar with the difference between plain and figurative expressions, he is required to change plain language into figurative. To enable him to do this, a hint is given him in the following form. Suppose, for instance, that I wish him to express this sentence in a figure:

“He sunk in the water,” and to aid his imagination I suggest the word *swallow*. It immediately occurs to him that the expression “The waters swallowed him,” expresses the same idea.

So also with the sentence; “The number of those who are alive, is very small compared with those who have died.” The mention of the words *tread* — and *slumber* — immediately suggest that beautiful idea of him who stands at the head of the list of our native bards;

“All that tread  
The globe are but a handful to the tribes  
That slumber in its bosom.”

The facility with which the pupil, after a little practice, with the aid of models and suggestions like these, will convert plain into figurative language, and thus by degrees acquire the elegancies of style, is really surprising. No exercise perhaps has a more powerful tendency in cultivating the imagination than this; and if that were its only effect, it would certainly be worth the trial.

I return now from this digression to the subject of simple themes. Having finished the study of his subject, the pupil's thoughts may be brought to a proper direction by the following heads.

1. The Definition.
2. The Cause.
3. The Antiquity or Novelty.
4. The Universality or Locality.
5. The Effects, namely, the advantages or disadvantages.
6. The Antithesis.
7. The Conclusion and Comparison.

The same remark may be made with regard to these heads as was applied to those in connexion with description; namely, that it is not *necessary* that all of them be embraced — nor in all cases to adhere to the same order in the arrangement.

I stop here a moment to consider an objection. As I find it ready at my hands, *with its answer*, in the "London Quarterly Journal of Education;" I give it to you in the words of the Reviewer.

"Such rules as these may be thought calculated to shackle, rather than forward the pupil. But their object is not so much to give freedom, as precision, to the movements of the mind; and however unpromising such a method may appear, for giving grace or vigor to the expression of thought, we approve of the judgment which led our author to adopt it as the basis of these lessons. *There can be no logical writing without it.* It may be true that no elegant compositions are written upon such a model, because it is the perfection of art to conceal art; but were they analyzed and dissected by a skilful hand, all or most of these parts would be found interwoven with the texture of the composition. The discipline implied in these exercises, is as necessary for forming the mind to correct thought, as the style to the correct expression of it. Few men ever became deep thinkers or clear writers, whose minds have not been accustomed to logical

investigation. Without it, mental conclusions are loose and desultory. As soon as a habit of generalizing the thoughts is acquired by this artificial process, the pupil is released from his restraints, and is at last allowed to write Essays without being required to observe the order pursued in his simple and complex themes."

The method which I recommend in writing complex themes is similar in its character to that pursued with simple subjects. A simple theme describes some particular subject, generally expressed in a single word, term or phrase; and embraces a view of its properties, qualities and effects. A complex theme is a proposition or assertion which relates to a simple subject; an exhortation to practice some particular virtue, or action, — or to avoid some particular vice or deed — or it is the proving of some truth.

The directions relating to the study of simple themes are to be regarded, and applied to complex subjects — in addition to which certain special rules must be observed, which pertain only to subjects of this nature.

The time that I have already taken up will prevent my extending these remarks to the length which I originally intended. I have already trespassed upon your patience, and have but entered on my subject. I must here leave the consideration of complex themes, unfinished as it is. But I cannot take leave of this department of my theme, without suggesting to the pupil, in this stage of his progress, the advantage to be gained by the study of *general subjects*, of every kind of variety, without taking the trouble to *record* the result of his reflections. Such a practice will have a beneficial effect in giving him *fluency*, when he is unexpectedly called upon; and will also impart skill and readiness in extemporaneous discourse or debate.

This accords with the advice of Cicero, who "recommends to the young and ambitious rhetorician to study subjects in the abstract; that he may be prepared on every topic which shall come into discussion, or at all events, require only a little time to fill up names, dates, and circumstances."\*

After the subject of simple and complex themes, the next step towards the higher departments of composition is an exercise, which for the want of a better term, I call methodising.

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\* From Jardine, page 163.

It resembles that part of a regular discourse, which in common treatises on rhetoric, is called *the Division*. The difficulty of the exercise should not deter the pupil from attempting it; for, it must be recollected that no one can write well, who has no ability to present his subject in a methodical manner. As no two individuals would probably methodise a subject in the same manner, the only directions that can be given here, are

*First*, That diligent attention must be paid to the *unity* of the subject; and no particular, or head, be introduced that is not strictly and intimately connected with it.

*Second*, The heads or divisions must be sufficiently comprehensive to embrace all that is important pertaining to it.

In methodising a subject, it must be borne in mind that there are three important particulars which generally require notice in simple themes — namely, *the nature* — *the importance* — and the *effects*; and in compound subjects, the *explanation*, — the *proof* and the *confirmation*.

The study of a subject will sometimes involve a process of reasoning, leading to conclusions and results wholly unforeseen and unexpected. This method called *Investigation*, is very fully, clearly and skilfully explained in a work to which I have already referred — I mean Jardine's "Outlines of a Philosophical Education." The teacher who would carry his pupil to the highest attainments in the art of writing, will find many very valuable suggestions in this excellent work.

I here conclude what I have to offer in relation to that first difficulty which besets the pupil in his early attempts at composition, namely, the want of ideas. What I have further to say will detain you but a few moments longer. I have shown that there is a generating principle in every mind, however immature, which by the aid of its own powers will lead it to new acquisitions; will open to it new mines of wealth, and discover new springs, flowing from inexhaustible fountains. There is, it is true, a widely extended difference in the strength and capacity of every intellect; and the teacher must proportion his expectations to this difference — yet he will find in all, (such is the fertility of minds) that the miracle which the prophet wrought for the widow of Sarepta, has its analogy in the productions even of the youngest intellect. The mind is



never *drained*, — the barrel of meal shall not waste — neither shall the cruse of oil fail. Every idea — every thought seems like the worm encircled in its silken shroud, intent alone on the business of leaving its progeny behind — nay, more — like the polypus, that connecting link between animal and vegetable existence, it may be divided and subdivided, and still exist a perfect being of its kind in each of its minutest subdivisions. And again, like the newly discovered spring, which at first, sends forth to human labor, a brackish and a muddy current, that is soon succeeded by a purer flow, the mind becomes a richer and more copious fountain of thought and sentiment, the more it is called upon to impart its riches.

I come now to the subject of expression. And in the first place, the pupil must be made acquainted with the origin and component parts of the language — its structure, its prevailing idioms — the principles which regulate the position of words in sentences, — the nature, diversity, and requisites of the principal kinds of style — the causes of this diversity — the means of forming a correct taste in composition. He must not be confined to the mere properties or offices of the different parts of speech, but extend his observations and inquiries to the connexion which exists between them, and the things or thoughts for which they stand. He must be accustomed to compare the naked idea with the dress in which it is clothed. The *Venus de Medici* itself would cease to enchant the world, were it arrayed in the habiliments of a modern belle. The beauties of style must be thoughtfully blended with the beauties of sentiment, in order to form those models, which an admiring world will applaud, as they shine forth in the polished pages of the author, the beautiful imagery of the poet, the harmonious periods of the orator, or the conversational smartness of the man of letters. All this is accomplished by regular steps, and laborious application. It is not of spontaneous growth, it is not of voluntary and unaided intuition. I would that my limits would allow me to refer to the principles of rhetorical rule, of grammatical analysis, of logical synthesis, and philological detail. But I am admonished by the hour, to bring my remarks to a close. I cannot, however, dismiss the subject, without enjoining it upon the teacher, to impress upon the pupil, the importance, in writing as well as in speaking, of regarding that advice,

quaintly given by a late venerable head of one of our literary institutions, in his valedictory address, to one of the classes :

“ Young gentlemen,” said the president, “ let me give you this word of parting advice. Never to speak, until you have something to say — and be sure to finish, — as soon as you have done.”



# LECTURE IX.

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ON THE

EVILS OF THE PRESENT SYSTEM

OF

PRIMARY INSTRUCTION.

By THOMAS H. PALMER.





## EVILS OF PRIMARY INSTRUCTION.

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WHEN a wise man finds his dwelling getting out of order, and becoming incapable of excluding the elements, he first sets afoot a thorough examination of the premises, and then sits down to calculate whether it be more prudent and economical to repair its deficiencies, or to tear down the whole edifice, and reconstruct it from the foundation. It is in this manner, I think, we ought to examine the system of education in our common schools. The whole community seem now to be aware, that it has failed to produce the effects we had a right to expect, viz. that of making us a *reading* and a *thinking people*. It is sufficiently obvious, that not one out of twenty — nay, may I not say, not one out of fifty — who has had no further privilege of education than our district schools afford, has derived that advantage which they *ought* to confer on every individual, the ability of going forward alone with his education.

In many respects, it is true, New England enjoys a most admirable system of education. The plan of bringing the school-house almost to every man's door can never be too highly prized. The provision for moral culture has been no less liberal. When we view the innumerable temples to the living God which stud the landscape, with their humble but indispensable adjuncts, the little school-houses, clustering around, like children about a common parent, or more properly, perhaps, like quarrymen and laborers around the master-architect; — when we view these things, I say, who can fail to be

proud of New England? But, gentlemen, it will not do to fold our hands, as if our ancestors had done every thing. The very institution of this society shows that public opinion has been awakened to the defects of our system of education. Let, then, the inquiry to-day be, whether our course has been that of the prudent householder; whether we have made a thorough examination of every part of the edifice before determining on our mode of procedure; or whether our conduct has not, on the contrary, been headlong and inconsiderate; patching here — beautifying there; whether, in fact, we have not attached more importance to *enlarging the course* of studies, than to fixing the *foundation* on a firm and sure basis. Let me not be understood to say that the foundation has been entirely overlooked. Certainly many of the more obvious defects have been removed or repaired. But I fear that the examination has been by no means sufficiently thorough; and that too much attention has been devoted to mere ornaments or additions. In order to ascertain this fact, let us inquire of the million of adults which New England contains, how many are really *efficient readers*; what number can make a practical use of their education, by improving their minds and bettering their hearts by study; and, among the hundreds of thousands who weekly throng the altar of God, how many have minds so disciplined as to be able to command a patient effort of thought, to follow throughout the chain of reasoning of the speaker. Look around upon one even of our most intelligent congregations, observe the dull eyes and heavy countenances of the audience, and then say, like Abraham interceding for Sodom,\* whether you can see fifty — thirty — twenty — ten. Alas! I fear that even this insignificant number could scarcely be reckoned.

“The great aim of an enlightened and benevolent philosophy,” says the learned and amiable Dugald Stewart, “is not to rear a *small number* of individuals, who may be regarded as prodigies in an ignorant and admiring age; but to diffuse as wisely as possible, that degree of cultivation, which may enable the *bulk* of a people to possess all the intellectual and moral improvement of which their nature is susceptible.” This is one of those sentiments which only need to be presented to the mind to be universally acquiesced in. For, surely, it requires no labored argument to prove that virtue,

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\* Gen. xviii. 23—32.

liberty, and happiness are the natural fruits of a proper *intellectual* culture ; while vice, slavery, and misery are generally the concomitants of its neglect. *Moral* culture is undoubtedly the most important branch of education ; but it should never be forgotten, that morals rest on a foundation exceedingly insecure, where the intellect has been neglected. Where do fanaticism, bigotry, and popular frenzy find a congenial soil ? Amongst the well-educated ? Where does the impostor, Joe Smith, find the materials for building his expensive temples to mormonism ? Where did the impious Matthias and Jemima Wilkinson find followers ? Certainly not among the intelligent.

But, if the universal diffusion of an enlightened education be incumbent on every nation, it is surely in a peculiar manner the duty of these United States. Elsewhere, government is in a greater or less degree, in the hands of the few. Here, it is emphatically a government of the *whole people*. Every man, whatever be his station, intelligence, or pecuniary means, is called to co-operate in the choice of our rulers, and no one is excluded even from the highest offices of government. If, then, our institutions be really valuable ; if we wish to perpetuate them ; if we would prevent this nation from following the usual course of liberty — anarchy — despotism ; how indispensable the necessity for an enlightened education for *all* ! Without it, on what a sandy foundation are our liberties placed ! The fearful spread of lynching and mob-law ought to wake us from our lethargy. It calls us with a voice of thunder to arouse and apply the remedy, before our invaluable institutions are levelled with the dust. The longing eyes of the whole world are upon us. The best hopes of mankind will be prostrated, should the experiment of the most perfect state of freedom fail, under the peculiarly propitious circumstances with which we have been favored. What a triumph would this be to the despots of Europe ! It would do more towards perpetuating their sway over the oppressed, than the arms of millions of mercenaries. It would operate as a fatal blow to liberty, an extinguishment of free institutions for ages.

Some persons, it is said, have objected to the *levelling* tendency of the efforts now making to raise the standing of our common schools, and facilitating self-education ; declaring, that they have no desire that the offspring of the humble laborer should enter life under equally favorable auspices with their children. Illiberality of sentiment like this, is, I trust, con-



finer to a small number, and is not, I hope, to be found within these walls. But how weak and short-sighted are the optics of those who can see things in this light! Can any man of intelligence choose to be restricted in the selection of his society to a small number? Which state of society is most desirable, that in which knowledge and intelligence are thinly scattered, where our associates are few, and at great distances apart; or that in which we should find kindred minds in every dwelling, and where our thoughts and views should be appreciated and responded to by every individual. But, as contracted souls like these can scarcely be expected to feel such considerations, let us descend to the level of their capacities, and speak of pounds, shillings, and pence. Where, then, I would ask is property most secure? Where is the smallest amount of taxes required, for the building and support of penitentiaries, prisons, and poor-houses; for the repression of crime, and the support of pauperism? But away with such blind selfishness! It can only exist with those whose associates are mere boon companions. Here, I grant, wealth is a necessary concomitant to what is falsely termed friendship. But of what importance are riches in that species of society where soul speaketh to soul, and mind answereth to mind?

But, independent of all such considerations, are not the rich as well as the poor interested in the improvement of primary education? Does not the efficiency of academies and colleges depend in a great degree on the state of education in our common schools? Could the lethargic, confused, dreamy intellects which now enter college, compete with the bright, well-disciplined youth which a highly improved state of primary education would send there? Besides, what advantages would accrue to the members of the liberal professions, by being relieved from that mental wandering which besets them during their hours of study, and which will be found, on examination, to be chiefly the result of the vicious habits acquired in learning to read.

After all, however, the objection rests on a mere fallacy. It is founded on the notion that our academies and colleges would be stationary, however much the condition of the district schools might be improved. Is this probable; nay, is it possible? Certainly not. Every advance made by the district schools would push forward the academies and colleges in a double or treble ratio.

Let us hear no more, then, of such contracted notions.

Rich and poor, parent and child, the learned and the ignorant, the patriot and the true Christian, all are highly interested in the measures of this institution.

In order to have a thorough examination of the state of primary education, I propose to offer you a picture of our district schools, such as they were everywhere six or eight years ago, and such as they still are in many, and I fear in most parts of New England, and to contrast them with one conducted as it should be. Such a school, I must confess, I have never seen; for, though much has been effected by the labors of many worthy and able men, the old mechanical leaven still clings to too many even of our best teachers, especially in the initiatory branches, undoubtedly the most important of all. One great difficulty arises from the very constitution of the schools. If an intelligent teacher could commence with a school composed entirely of beginners, he would have full scope for his talents, and might soon show the powerful effects of a judicious intellectual course. But, in the district school, he finds children in every stage of progress, most of them having more or less of the inveterate habits of the old-fashioned system. And so strong is the principle of imitation in early youth, that it is exceedingly difficult to prevent the younger class from copying all the bad habits of their elders.

In the proposed examination, though much of what I shall offer will be applicable to the higher branches of education, my attention will be principally devoted to reading, orthography, writing, and arithmetic, the grand essentials, the foundation on which the whole superstructure of education must rest. If these be taught thoroughly and properly, and every bad habit be carefully excluded, the future progress of the child cannot fail to be rapid, and, in fact, it will be a matter of but secondary importance whether his *school* education extend any farther. He will be inspired with an ardent, an unquenchable thirst for knowledge, and he will be in possession of a *key*, which can unlock all its stores.

As this examination will lead to considerable minuteness of detail, and as the subject is naturally dry, it here becomes necessary for me to bespeak your patience and candid attention. By treating the subject in a different manner, by dealing chiefly in splendid generalities, much more momentary interest would no doubt be excited. But the object now in view is far different from that of pleasing the fancy. If, as I firmly believe, the chief defects of the present system lie in the man-

agement of the initiatory steps; if habits are here acquired which exert a most prejudicial effect on the whole future course of education, and which no after discipline can completely remove, we must, should we determine to remove the difficulty, prepare to enter on a nice and critical examination, however dry or irksome may be the inquiry. Relying, then, on your candor and patience, I shall enter on my subject without farther apology.

Happening, a few years ago, to be chosen one of the committee for examining teachers in the town in which I reside, it became my duty to visit and examine the district schools. In the course of these visits, I was much struck with the heavy, dull, vacant countenances of the pupils, the cause of which quickly appeared. For, when the reading classes took their places, it was easy to perceive, that the mind was no farther engaged in the exercise than attention to the pronunciation of the words required. As to comprehension of the *meaning*, the language might almost as well have been Greek, Arabic, or Chinese, as English. The consequence of such a commencement is apparent. An inveterate habit of mechanical reading is formed, (if reading, indeed, that can be called, which is nothing but a mere utterance of sounds) which not one in fifty can ever overcome. Here lies the grand impediment to the attainment of knowledge, the impassable barrier to self-education. If the question of Philip were addressed to our youth, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" could a different answer be returned from that of the Ethiopian eunuch, "How can I, except some man guide me?"\* Not a step can they advance of themselves. No!

———"Knowledge to their eyes her ample page,  
Rich with the spoils of time *can* ne'er unroll."†

Nor is this all. They are as unfit to receive knowledge from the ear as from the eye. This habit of mental wandering is carried to the house of God, rendering vain the efforts of the most eloquent speaker. All that their minds are capable of receiving, is here a little and there a little; but, as to a continued attention to a connected discourse, it is vain to look for it.

To what extent the schools in this section of the country resemble those I have described, I have had no means of as-

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\* Acts viii. 30, 31.

† Gray.



certaining ; but, that every one may judge for himself, I shall briefly describe the plan of education existing at that period in the schools alluded to. The pupils commenced with the spelling-book, from which they learned the alphabet. Next came their a, b, ab, e, b, eb, &c. followed by spelling lessons of words of one syllable, in columns, without any connexion. Spelling words of two syllables came next in order. All this, you will perceive, is a mere affair of memory, in which the reason and judgment of the child are never called into action. For months, nay, in many instances, for years, he is occupied by barren sounds alone. He is taught to connect them, it is true, with certain characters ; but of their use, viz. to convey the *ideas* of others to his mind, he as yet knows nothing. Now, surely, it must be sufficiently evident, that the active mind of a child cannot be exclusively occupied with such tiresome drudgery. While engaged with these *names*, his body alone will be present. His mind will be far distant, at play with his schoolmates, or at the family fireside. Can the pernicious habit of suffering the thoughts and tongue to be differently engaged fail to be generated by such a course as this ?

What was called *reading* was now introduced, which in no respect differed from what preceded, save that there *was* some attempt at meaning in the arrangement of the words, but as the chief object of the compiler seemed to be the collection of words easy to be pronounced, without reference to the capacity of the pupil, his efforts were as mechanical as ever. Indeed, the manner of reciting these lessons would have rendered nugatory all attempts of the compiler to carry sense as well as sound to the mind of the child. For, as every word was alternately spelled and pronounced, no shade of meaning could by any possibility reach the mind of the pupil among such a farrago of sounds.

Meanwhile the study of columns of words, arbitrarily arranged, was still continued, with the vain expectation of thus learning to spell. But correct orthography can never be acquired in this manner. Experience proves, that the most adroit speller orally, will totally fail when he attempts to commit his ideas to writing. In fact, orthography can only be thoroughly acquired by a great deal of practice in writing, and by a habit of observing the form of words while reading, a habit easily acquired. What can be more absurd than the idea of learning to spell by rote the whole of the English



language, consisting of upwards of eighty thousand words? But, lest the slightest incredulity should remain, let me ask you, Gentlemen of the Institute, how you learned the orthography of the various terms of science, with which you no doubt are familiar, and with the numerous inflections and irregularities of the nouns and pronouns, adjectives and verbs? None can be found in the spelling-book, and many not even in the dictionary. How, then, I ask, have they been acquired? Was it not by a habit of observing the form of words while reading? Truly, a dependence on the spelling-book or dictionary, "is trusting to a broken reed, on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand and pierce him."\* What an expense of time, what a waste of intellect, is incurred in this fatiguing study, which, properly pursued, is acquired almost insensibly.

Is it a matter of wonder, if, after one or more years drudgery like this, the child becomes utterly disgusted with books, which are not even expected to present a single idea to his mind. Nothing but words, words, words! For month after month, year after year, nothing save mere unmeaning sounds! Can it surprise any one who bestows a moment's attention on the subject, that habits of mental wandering should cling to us through life, which even the discipline of the mathematics and classical studies should fail to eradicate, when our minds have been bewildered at the outset, by so preposterous a course? What then can we expect from those who have *no* such advantage? Can the whole mass of our literature be other than a sealed book to them? How can we expect that they should be able to advance a single step without a guide? The effects of this unfortunate commencement are not confined to the district schools. The bad habits which it introduces, totally preclude self-education. They close the avenue of knowledge to the whole people, rendering reading wearisome and dull, instead of a delight. They cause the progress of students in college to be fatiguing, slow, and uncertain, and they form one of the chief causes of the inefficiency of the pulpit.

It is true, that many, and perhaps most of your schools are much improved, and that the picture I am now drawing is no longer strictly applicable. Yet even in that case the principles I am about to lay down may be useful. I have visited the schools in various sections of our extensive country, north

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\* 2 Kings, xviii. 21.

and south, east and west, and, though I have been pleased to see the general attention bestowed on the subject, and the valuable improvements that have been introduced, yet everywhere have I seen too much of the old mechanical method: the cramming of children with words without ideas; the constant exercise of the memory, and the neglect of the thinking principle. To give an example: as an examination of a class of young ladies in chemistry, in one of our higher seminaries, I was equally pleased and surprised at the readiness and fluency of their replies. Conceive, then, my disappointment, when, on investigation, I found they merely quoted the *words* of the book they were studying, which they had marked off with a pencil for that purpose, and that they were in reality profoundly ignorant of the subject about which they had been gabbling. In another select school, under the care of a collegian who graduated a few months afterwards, one of the pupils, who requested his assistance, in a question in arithmetic that puzzled him, was told to pass it over, as he (the teacher) had left his *books* at college! A witty writer of the last century,\* whose works are enriched with many admirable remarks on education, observes, the “languages should be learned by rote, but science never.” Our teachers generally reverse this rule. They attempt to teach reading by principles, which are totally unintelligible to the child, and, when his mind is more matured, they endeavor to teach him science by rote.

Mankind have been constantly accumulating knowledge for nearly six thousand years, and all this vast accumulation, the united result of the labors, experience and discoveries of the whole race, is, or ought to be, at the command of every member of the community. The grand object of our teachers, then, should be to supply every child with a *key* to this invaluable store-house, and to instruct him how to use it with *ease* and *effect*. And what is this *key*? It is nothing more than *intelligent reading*, with such a degree of mental discipline, as will give the pupil a command over his own thoughts, and enable him to confine his attention to the subject before him, in place of suffering it to wander vaguely from Dan to Beersheba. I know of nothing so well calculated to promote this discipline as the practice of mental arithmetic; and I venture to say, and I trust I shall be able presently to demonstrate it satisfactorily, that if a child be taught to read intelli-

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\* Sterne.

gently, and have his mind properly disciplined by mental arithmetic, or any other suitable exercise, he has in reality received a better education, and will probably attain more general knowledge, than if he had gone through the whole range of scholastic science, in the usual mechanical manner. Such a pupil cannot fail to have a taste for knowledge ; and, so great are now the facilities for reading, that, however humble or retired may be his situation, he will have ample means of gratifying it. In elucidation of this idea, allow me to quote an anecdote of Edmund Stone, an eminent mathematician who flourished about a century ago, when the means of procuring books were incomparably smaller than at present. "The father of Stone, it appears, was gardener to the Duke of Argyll, who, walking one day in his garden, observed a Latin copy of Newton's Principia, lying on the grass, and, thinking it *must* have been brought from his own library, called some one to carry it back to its place. Upon this, Stone, who was then in his eighteenth year, claimed the book as his own. 'Yours,' replied the duke ; 'do you understand geometry, Latin, and Newton?' 'I know a little of them,' replied the young man. The duke was surprised ; and, having a taste for the sciences, he entered into conversation with the young mathematician. He asked him several questions, and was astonished at the force, the accuracy, and the candor of his answers. 'But how,' said the duke, 'came you by the knowledge of all these things?' Stone replied, 'A servant taught me, ten years since, to read. Does one need to know any thing more than the twenty-four letters, in order to know every thing else that one wishes?' The duke's curiosity redoubled : he sat down on a bank, and requested a detail of the whole process by which he had become so learned. 'I first learned to read,' said Stone ; 'the masons were then at work upon your house. I approached them one day and observed that the architect used a rule and compasses, and that he made calculations. I inquired what might be the meaning and use of these things, and I was informed that there was a science called arithmetic. I purchased a book of arithmetic, and I learned it. I was told there was another science, called geometry ; I bought the necessary books and I learned geometry. By reading I found that there were good books on these two sciences in Latin. I bought a [grammar and] dictionary, and I learned Latin. I understood, also, that there were good books of the same kind in French. I bought



a [grammar and] dictionary, and I learned French. And this, my lord, is what I have done. It seems to me that we may learn every thing when we know the twenty-four letters of the alphabet.' ”\*

Yes! We *may* learn ourselves every thing when we know the twenty-four letters of the alphabet. And would to God that on the walls of every school-house, this sentiment were written in letters of gold. For, although every child will not turn out an Edmund Stone, who can for a moment doubt, that the prevailing notion that we must be *taught* every thing has a most pernicious effect in education?

It may, perhaps, be thought by some, that the idea of acquiring foreign languages without a teacher, is chimerical; and, with respect to *speaking* them, this will readily be granted, for pronunciation must be taught orally. But it should be recollected that the object of young Stone was merely to *read the books* in the language. That this may be readily attained I know by personal experience, and any one who takes up a good grammar and dictionary will, I believe, soon satisfy himself of its practicability. But, whatever may be thought of acquiring languages in this way, surely there cannot be a doubt that any intelligent reader, whose mind has been so disciplined as to be able to give *undivided attention* to the subject with which he is engaged, may acquire a knowledge of every thing contained in English literature. And what is there truly valuable that is not, at the present day, contained in English literature, in the original or in translations?

Perhaps it may here be objected, that the *desire* of knowledge is wanting among our youth, and it is but too true that it now appears faintly, if at all. But why? let me ask. Can it be, that the youth of New England, whose general character throughout the world is that of shrewdness and intelligence, are blind to the advantages of scientific knowledge? Does not this seeming apathy rather arise from the apparent hopelessness of the pursuit; from the prevalent idea already alluded to, that science cannot be acquired without the aid of a teacher? that a knowledge of the twenty-four letters and their combinations, is *not* all that is wanted? And unfortunately this idea is but too strongly confirmed by our mechanical and inefficient mode of education.

Let us now direct our attention for a moment, to arithmetic.

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\* Library of Entertaining Knowledge, Vol. III.



Here the same absurd system is followed up. See what pains are taken to prevent the slightest exertion of the pupil's intellect. Tables of every kind are prepared to save him the labor of thinking, and every operation is conducted by means of a set of mechanical rules, which he uses without knowing why. A pupil may practice according to these rules for years, till every operation has become perfectly familiar to him, and yet he may be profoundly ignorant of the first principles of arithmetic. Thus is a science, probably the best adapted to lead the youthful mind into trains of reasoning, and habits of patient investigation, perverted into a means of leading youth into implicit, blind reliance on the dicta of their books and teachers: an admirable method of preparing the community for ready dupes of demagogues, quacks, and fanatics.

Having thus brought to view some of the principal defects of our present system of education, let us now inquire into the best means of removing them. But first I would premise, that there is a serious mistake pervading the community, which calls for the united efforts of every philanthropist for its removal. The mistake alluded to is the notion that education is finished on finally leaving school or college. This is, indeed, completely to mistake the means for the end. The grand characteristic which distinguishes humanity from the brute creation is the continual progression of the mind in improvement, and its insatiable longings after knowledge, when not smothered in the bud by an injudicious mode of education. What would be thought of their conduct, who spared neither pains nor expense to have their children taught the use of tools, which they *knew* were immediately to be laid aside forever? And in what respects does this conduct differ from that of those who teach children to consider their education finished when they enter the world. We attend school or college merely to learn the use of *tools* to assist in our continual accumulations of knowledge. Education constitutes man's truest enjoyment. It is never finished, in this world certainly; and, may I not with humility add, nor in the next either. One of the most admired of our moral writers observes, "There is not, in my opinion, a more pleasing and triumphant consideration in religion than this, of the perpetual progress which the soul makes towards the perfection of its nature, without ever arriving at a period in it. To look upon the soul as going on from strength to strength; to consider that she is to shine forever with new accessions of glory, and

brighten to all eternity ; that she will be still adding virtue to virtue, and knowledge to knowledge, carries in it something wonderfully agreeable to that ambition which is natural to the mind of man. Nay, it must be a prospect pleasing to *God himself* to see his creation forever beautifying in his eyes, and drawing nearer to him by greater degrees of resemblance. The soul, considered with its Creator, is like one of those mathematical lines that may draw nearer to another for all eternity without a possibility of touching it ; and can there be a thought so transporting, as to consider ourselves in these perpetual approaches to him, who is not only the standard of perfection but of happiness.”\* Let me, then, conjure all who hear me to assist in the extirpation of the pernicious error of considering education as *capable* of being finished. The most learned men are the most modest in this respect. Like the traveller among the Alps, the higher they rise, the loftier the heights they see before them.

The chief distinctions between the old mode of teaching reading, and the one I recommend, consist, 1st. In *commencing* with words and phrases, instead of the *names* of letters and syllables. 2dly. Pursuing with unremitting constancy the system of questioning the pupil as to what he has read, his lessons of course being always adapted to his capacity. 3dly. Exercising the classes, immediately after their reading lessons, in spelling words taken indiscriminately from the lesson read, and always without previous study. 4thly. Reading with proper and with sufficient emphasis, and with due inflections of voice, instead of in the drawling, or in the hurried, unnatural mode now practised in our schools.

1. *Commencing with familiar words and phrases, instead of names of letters and syllables.* The reason for commencing in this manner must be, I think, sufficiently obvious from what has already been said. As this, however, is conceived to be one of the most important peculiarities of the new system, and one which has given rise to much opposition, it may be well to devote to it a little more of our attention. The dislike manifested to this innovation, arises principally from the idea that the *naming* of the *letters* leads naturally to the *sound* of the *word*. But this is evidently a mistake, arising from confounding the *names* with the *powers* of the letters, which in most cases are totally different. Striking examples

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\* Addison.

of this occur in the words *hat* and *which* ; and any one may satisfy himself of the folly of this practice by slowly naming the letters, and then observing the sound of the word [viz. hat, aitch-a-tee, &c.] In fact, no reasonable person, who would calmly examine the subject, could for a moment doubt, that if a child, or an adult who could not read, were told that the three letters *c, a, t*, formed one of the following words, *hat, cat, or man*, from the sound of the letters, he could not tell for which word they stood. It is popularly, and perhaps truly said, that an ounce of practice is worth a pound of theory. Now this mode has been practised successfully in a number of schools. I have used it also with the best results in my own family. Some persons, perhaps, may think, that it would be well to bend to the popular prejudice on this score, as it could not be a matter of much moment whether a child commenced with letters or words. On the most mature reflection, however, I confess that I cannot see the subject in this light. Exceedingly desirous as I am of smoothing down opposition, and conciliating friends to reform, this would be among the last of the improvements that I would willingly resign. The *first* steps are of paramount importance. Interest the child in the commencement, let him clearly see the object and use of his studies, and you will be able to teach him from time to time the names of his letters, and then smaller combinations, while he is going on with his reading, and with but little risk of his acquiring the habit of mental wandering, that most powerful adversary of self-education, which I am so desirous of rendering universal. This method, which may be termed the analytical system, is truly the method of nature. In her communications to man, she always proceeds from generals to particulars. We know a tree, and can name it, long before we become acquainted with its constituents, the leaves, limbs, trunk, and root ; a house, before we have even heard of the shingles, boards, timbers, brick, or stone ; a man, before his parts, the head, neck, body, limbs, hands, or feet. And, finally, we have formed a long vocabulary, before we know any thing of syllables or letters.

2. *Pursuing steadily and constantly a system of questioning the pupils as to what they have read.* The advantages of this plan are so obvious, that it would be a waste of time to offer arguments in its favor. It should never for a moment be lost sight of, from the first short phrase taught the child of three years old, to the last lesson he reads in school.



With children duly exercised in this manner, *committing to memory* will be altogether unnecessary. The *first* reading of any subject suited to their capacity will generally be sufficient to impress it on their minds, and subjects beyond their capacity should never be touched. I shall only add, that no one will ever be a reader who cannot make himself master of any common subject by one perusal.

3. *Exercising the pupils, immediately after their reading lessons, in spelling words taken indiscriminately from the lesson read, without previous study.* So much has already been said on the subject of orthography, that it is only necessary to add, that this practice should be commenced as soon as the child is familiar with the names of his letters; that the lessons should be short, and that at first we should be content with the child's spelling from the book, leading him, by slow degrees to spell without book. But in all cases it should be *without previous study*. To form a good speller, the child must acquire the *habit* of recalling to his mind the form of the word, of seeing it as it were before him. This is a very desirable habit in many other points of view. No one can truly relish poetry, who has not, at will, the power of calling up images into his mind.

4. *Reading with proper and sufficient emphasis, and with due inflections of voice, instead of the hurried, or drawling, unnatural mode now practised in our schools.* What a beautiful accomplishment is the art of reading well! And how rare is the gift! And yet reading is nothing more than speaking from a book. How extraordinary it is, then, that, among the thousands who *speak* naturally and fluently, so few, so *very* few, should be able to read with any degree of propriety! The moment that the most intelligent child, who is accustomed to deliver his own ideas in a lively and spirited manner, attempts to deliver the ideas of another, viz. to read a book, he assumes the most dull, heavy, spiritless, monotonous delivery. It grieves me to the heart to say, that this remark applies with striking force to most of the ministers of the gospel. Until this serious evil is removed from our primary schools, is it not the duty of our colleges to take some efficient steps to remedy the mischief, so far as it applies to their students? Is it not of the first importance that students for the ministry should be able to read with effect? What can this deficiency arise from, but the pernicious practice of children learning to read without attending to the sense? For



good reading is perfectly natural, bad reading is an artificial acquirement. Were a *new school* to be formed entirely of infants, the only precaution necessary to make *all* good readers would be, that they should read nothing but what they thoroughly understood. But in schools constituted as at present, there is the serious evil of bad models among the elder scholars, which it will take some trouble to prevent the younger from copying. To those who learn from the first to read intelligently, only one rule is necessary, "Do not hurry."

There is an evil attending the improved mode of reading, which at first sight is rather startling, but which I trust there will be but little difficulty in obviating, if not actually transmuting to a good. What I allude to is the expense arising from the great variety of reading books required. As the pupils, according to the improved system, are made in every instance to understand what they read, they cannot be confined as formerly for months and years to the same book. According to the old method, a lesson may be read over nineteen times within a very short period, and on the twentieth be as new to them as ever. But, according to the new method, before they have read a book the third time, the pupils are perfectly familiar with every part of its contents. A great variety of books hence becomes indispensable, and the question arises, how this call can be answered without additional expense to poor parents, to whom it may be a serious tax. In answer to this question I should propose, that the same sum which is now annually spent for books by individuals in each district should be judiciously laid out by the prudential committee, or by a select committee, in a good selection of books, to be the common property of the district. Let these be placed under the care of the teacher, whose duty it should be to see that they are carefully used, to teach them in fact how to handle them. Two or three of a kind might be sufficient; for, when a class is called to read, the books could pass from hand to hand, the whole class being called on to give their attention to what is read, so as to be able to give a satisfactory account of the subject when questioned by the teacher. Indeed, the whole school might be advantageously occupied in attending to these reading lessons; their judgments would be matured, and valuable habits of attention formed, by judicious questions suited to their relative capacities by the teacher. What a contrast would such a school present to those we have been accustomed to see! In the one, every mind would be

in full employment ; every ear attentive ; every eye full of fire. In the other, what listlessness ! What dull, heavy, vacant hours are the active little beings forced to endure ! Some are yawning and stretching, others asleep ; some are tearing their books, others gnawing the covers ; all sighing for action, or for liberty. But they will not merely learn habits of attention, and keep their minds continually active by this process. They may thus acquire the rudiments of science, and imbibe a taste for reading, which will have a strong tendency to give them domestic habits, and save them from low and vicious company. The money laid out in almost any one school for superficial and dry compends of geography would in two or three years purchase one of the best and most ample geographical works, a globe, and a good collection of large maps, as a permanent embellishment for the school-room. And why might not this collection form the nucleus of a library for every school district ? New England is rich enough for this desirable convenience. One half the money saved by the Temperance Society would amply suffice. All that is wanting is a taste for reading, which I am sanguine enough to believe a better mode of teaching would render universal. These little school libraries would transform the long, dreary winter evening into a season of delightful mental recreation. What an addition it would be to the happiness of society, what a beautiful prospect for the true patriot, to see the fireside of every peasant made cheerful, by the delights of science ; to hear, in every cottage, “ the poet’s or historian’s page by one made vocal for the amusement of the rest,”\* while the other members of the family were busily engaged in their various useful avocations. The storm, truly, might rage without, but within would be a holy calm. In vain, however, may books be placed in the hands of the people, till they have been taught to read with intelligence, and to think as well as to read. Till that has been done, books are indeed but *tedious dulness*. And surely much, very much of their usefulness is lost while no one can read aloud with effect : while the drawling of one, the hurried manner of another, and the listless monotony of all, distract or put to sleep the weary listener.

Is there anything really impracticable in all this ? If chil-

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\* Cowper.

dren are taught FROM THE FIRST to read with intelligence, and no books placed in their hands but such as are suited to their capacity, will they not acquire a thirst for knowledge, and if the means be within their reach, will they not continually advance in mental improvement? Let a child be taught to read well, and to think, and which of the sciences, what part of the whole circle of knowledge is beyond his reach? This is a subject, it appears to me, on which the community need information. The real value of our district schools is not generally felt. The people do not know, that but a slight modification of the manner of teaching the first branches is wanting, to place in the hands of *every child* a complete key to science, nay even to the learned languages, and that the expense of attaining knowledge by means of district libraries would be a mere trifle.

I see before me a large and respectable body of teachers whom our district school system brings into immediate contact with all the parents of the youth under their charge. They are literally denizens of every house. What a powerful effect might such a body produce, were each to use the very favorable position he occupies to enlighten the community on the importance of a reform in our district schools; to show the immense benefits that would accrue, if the minds of their children were so disciplined as to enable them to make a practical use of their reading; and to point out the causes why the present course is so inefficient. By such a course you would truly deserve the title of benefactors of your country.

Allow me here, however, to offer a caution. In our endeavors to do good, much evil frequently arises from hurrying matters too fast, or from endeavoring to do too much at once. We should also be careful not to allow our expectations to be too sanguine, nor suddenly to relax in our labors from disappointment at the want of immediate effects. The mass of mankind have little or no conception of the pleasures of the intellect. Of course they have no desire for them. Many, then, will not understand you when you speak of the advantages of education, without any reference to the purse. If you could promise their children such an education as would fit them for the learned professions, they would listen; but this you cannot do, as it would only lead to disappointment. Indeed it would be no real advantage; for these professions are already crowded to excess, and will more probably be relieved than further crowded by measures tending to



elevate the character and meliorate the prospects of the laboring classes. When this is effected, labor of all kinds will be equally respected, whether in the closet, the manufactory, the field, or the sick room.

There are three modes of acquiring information from books : by the eye alone ; by the ear alone ; and by the eye and ear together. In our district schools, no attention is paid but to the latter, though the two former are by far the most important. Let us examine them separately.

1. *By the eye alone, or silent reading.* A chapter, or story, as the case may be, should be given out to each class, which they should be directed to read over silently, once only, with great attention. The substance of this reading should be recited by one of the class, by turns, taking care that they are not called on in regular order, lest their indolence should induce all but the one to whose turn it fell to neglect the exercise. While the class is engaged in their silent reading, the teacher should see that no improper habits are acquired, such as moving the lips, or improper postures or motions of the body or limbs. The exercise of silent reading I take to be one of the most important of the improved mode of education. If properly carried into effect, if the pupils be so disciplined as generally to catch the substance of what they read by a single effort, they will have acquired a more valuable faculty than all they could gain by committing to memory every book in school. It will make them readers for life.

2. *By the ear.* This is one of those important exercises which have been wholly neglected in our schools. It is not sufficient that a child should be a *good reader*. It is of the first importance that he should also be a *good listener*. Of what consequence is the building of churches, and the employment of able and learned speakers therein, if the great mass of the people have not the art of listening ; if, through a defective education, they can neither follow nor appreciate the discourse. Perhaps it may be supposed that it is heedlessness rather than inability, what Shakspeare calls "the disease of not listening, the malady of not marking," that these audiences are troubled with ; but, when we observe the universality of this habit, and that it affects alike the anxious and the heedless, the most pious and the most careless, such a notion must fall to the ground. The method that I should recommend for producing the habit of listening with attention, is, that, at the opening of the school, at least once a day, the teacher, or one



of the best readers in school, should read aloud a short interesting story, or lesson in natural history, to the whole school, and that they should, without discrimination, be closely questioned as to the substance of the lesson. Of course these lessons should at first be on exceedingly simple subjects, and gradually progressive. Another valuable circumstance will arise out of this practice. The pupils will become interested in the readings, and a degree of regularity of attendance become habitual, which is now very unfrequent in our district schools. Many of the parents in the district in which I reside informed me, that when readings were introduced in their school, the children who had been the greatest laggards became impatient of the least delay, and sometimes could hardly take time to eat breakfast.

3. By the eye and ear together, or *reading aloud*. This, well done, is certainly a highly desirable accomplishment, but not of sufficient importance to absorb all our attention, as it has hitherto done. I trust that in future it will only occupy its due place, subordinate to the two former.

If time would permit, I should be happy to enlarge on this topic, but the fear of exhausting your patience prompts me to bring my remarks on reading to a close. These brief hints, I trust, however, have been sufficient to bring your attention to the subject. I leave the more extended discussion to abler heads.

WRITING. On the mere mechanical part of this essential branch of education I shall not trouble you with any remarks. To write a good hand is a desirable accomplishment, but it is of very inferior importance to the *intellectual* part of education. There is one way, however, in which it may be made to subserve the grand object of improving the mental faculties. Every child in school ought to be provided with a slate and pencil, and his leisure time occupied in copying the elements of letters, and letters and words, from good models, which should either be large sheets of pasteboard, hung in a conspicuous part of the room, or writing on a large black board, a convenience which no good school can possibly dispense with. As soon as they are able to write, a word should be written on the black board, and all the children required to write a sentence on their slates, in which *that word* should be incorporated. Substantives with which all are familiar should form the first exercises, such as man, bird, cat, dog; then adjectives, such as good, bad, sweet, sour. These may be fol-

lowed by pronouns and verbs, participles, adverbs, prepositions, and conjunctions. In this manner they will at once improve their handwriting and orthography, acquire a facility in composition, and a knowledge of grammar. After sufficient exercises in short sentences, they should proceed to longer ones, and from simple to compound sentences. It would also much improve their faculty of observation, if, after they had become somewhat familiar with composition, they were required to describe the objects they had seen since they rose in the morning, the trees, houses, streams, gardens, farms, they may have passed in their way to school; the state of the weather, the beauty and grandeur of the heavens, the peculiar beauties of each revolving season; the varying foliage of spring and autumn; the fervid heats of summer, and bracing cold of winter; the vivifying and enripening effects of the former, and the beauty and usefulness of the splendid robe with which the latter is encircled. Thus would be acquired also a taste for the beauties of nature, than which a more valuable gift cannot be presented to a child. It costs nothing; it is a source of the purest pleasure, and it has a strong tendency to excite the most delightful pious feelings. All that is necessary to create this taste in the youthful bosom is to direct his attention to the sublimity of our mountain scenery, the beauty of the plain chequered by the hand of industry, and fertilized by the meandering river. To point out the changes produced on the forest by the varying seasons, all alike surprising, all alike beautiful. To teach him to cast his eyes to the vault of heaven, now illumined by the dazzling rays of the king of day, now by the milder beams of the queen of night, surrounded by her thousand sparkling attendants; at one time dazzling as with the splendid hues of morning and evening; at another delighting us with the mildness of the azure, or the ever-varying hues and forms of the clouds in a summer's day. Let some or all of these sights be pointed out to a child, and there is no danger but that he will appropriate and enjoy them, provided it be done before his mind has become so engrossed with the rage for paltry pelf, as to see nothing in the sublimity of mountains but roughness and barrenness; in the beauty of cultivated plains, nothing but the money the crops will fetch; in the sky, nothing but signs of the weather. Such a taste as this extends a man's property over the whole of the visible creation, instead of

confining it to a few acres around his domicil. It enables him to exclaim, in the language of the poet,

“ Ye glittering towns, with wealth and splendor crowned ;  
 Ye fields, where summer spreads profusion round ;  
 Ye lakes, whose vessels catch the busy gale ;  
 Ye bending swains, who dress the flowery vale ;  
 For me your tributary stores combine :  
 Creation's heir, the world, the world is mine.”\*

Of the essentials of education, it now only remains to speak of the last, *arithmetic*. This science, notwithstanding the improvements it has received, is still in an exceedingly defective state. The arrangement of the subject is bad, and the number of the rules entirely too great. Time will only allow a glance at these topics.

Arithmetic is the science of proportion, and nothing more, and all questions may be solved by one rule. After the nature of ratio and proportion is explained, and this subject can be readily understood by a child of eight years of age, whose mind has been disciplined by learning to read in the way pointed out, the pupil will have no difficulty with arithmetic. Involution and evolution, arithmetical and geometrical progression, and compound interest, form no part of this science. They belong to algebra. Should it be thought best, however, still to teach them in connexion with arithmetic, they should be considered supplementary, in order to avoid complexity or confusion of ideas.

Before proceeding to the solution of questions, however, an introduction is necessary, explanatory of the nature of numbers, viz. of *numeration*, or notation, and the modes of increasing and diminishing them, or *addition* and *subtraction*, *multiplication* and *division* should be considered what they really are, viz. abbreviated modes of performing addition and subtraction in particular cases, that is, when more than one number of the same amount are to be added or subtracted. In arithmetic, as in reading, it is the foundation that is chiefly neglected. Few scholars have clear ideas on the subject of numeration. The consequence is, that every succeeding step becomes uncertain and difficult.

The notation of decimal fractions, and the mode of increasing and diminishing them, is treated of separately from whole

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\* Goldsmith.



numbers in every treatise on arithmetic that I have seen, and generally in an advanced section of the book. This arrangement is highly exceptionable, and, in my opinion, is the chief reason why so many complain of the difficulty of understanding decimals, a subject in itself so exceedingly simple. The fact is, the whole system of numbers is decimal, and fractions and integers are managed exactly alike. The sole difference is, that in whole numbers the units always occupy the extreme right, while their place in fractions is indicated by a point or dot. In placing this dot lies the only difficulty, if that deserves the name which can be made plain to a child of eight years old in the compass of a few lines. Notwithstanding the extreme simplicity of this subject, however, I have frequently been told, by persons who have gone through two or more courses of arithmetic, that they never could thoroughly understand decimals. How can this be accounted for otherwise than by the improper position of the subject in the treatise, which had students to *imagine* there *must* be something behind they do not see, something beneath the surface which their efforts fail to bring to light, an idea that confuses and mystifies the whole subject.

The different processes for managing federal money form another instance in which simplicity has been converted into complexity, light into darkness. On this subject we have rules for adding, subtracting, multiplying, dividing, and reducing, as if the first four differed in any respect from the rules for simple numbers, and as if any process but changing the place of the units were necessary for reducing one species of coin into another. All this will be seen through by a bright clear-headed child, but with most persons this mode of making a distinction when there is no difference, can only have the effect of rendering obscure and difficult a subject otherwise sufficiently plain and easy.

In the present state of affairs, it is necessary that our introduction should contain directions for managing compound numbers. It is to be hoped, however, that this necessity will be obviated before the lapse of many years, and our books of arithmetic be rid of what may be called the opprobrium of the science. Can any good reason be alleged why Congress have neglected the duty enjoined by the constitution of providing a uniform, simplified standard of weights and measures? If one were enacted corresponding to our decimal system of coinage, how very much would the ever-recurring calculations of buying



and selling be simplified ! What a continual waste of time and labor arises from the foolish complexity of the fractions of gallons, bushels, yards, miles, &c.

It appears then, that a good work on arithmetic should contain merely a clear and correct explanation of ratio and proportion, with a suitable variety of questions, together with an introduction treating of notation, and the simple rules of increase and decrease of integers and fractions. Should it be thought best, a supplement *might* be added, containing the roots, progressions, and compound interest. They properly belong, however, to another division of mathematics, being best explained by algebraical formulæ. What a relief would the introduction of such a system be to our youth, now distracted by the innumerable rules laid down in our common treatises on arithmetic.

But, although written arithmetic still needs much reform, there is one branch of the science of numbers, which has lately occupied much attention in our schools, that seems to have started almost at once into perfection. I allude to *mental arithmetic*, as first introduced by Warren Colburn. In this valuable book, the student is led, step by step, from the simple question of how many fingers he has on the hand, up to the most complicated and abstruse ones, all the while making his own rules. But the most valuable part of this system is, that the child is continually called upon to give an account of the operations of his own mind. The questions are solved mentally, — without the aid of pen or pencil ; and the teacher ought not to rest satisfied merely with a correct answer ; he should ask “ how he knows, how he ascertained it.” Two desirable acquisitions are thus made at once : the art of solving mentally any question in arithmetic, and the most valuable of all arts, the *art of thinking*.

But the most eminent advantages arising from this mode of teaching arithmetic are the habits of attention, of reflection, and patient investigation which it cannot fail to develope in every student. A question for instance, is put to a class, embracing a variety of numbers, all of which enter into its elements, and sometimes the question extends to ten or twelve lines. It is well known how difficult it is to remember numbers, and it will readily be perceived that the most strict attention must be paid to the question by the whole class, or some part would be lost. Now this habit of attention is a most invaluable acquisition. Indeed there seems to be no end to

the evils arising from the want of it. What is it which so frequently causes differences between families, and sometimes even embroil whole neighborhoods? Is it not generally the *want of attention*, and consequent misrepresentation of what has been done or said by indifferent persons? What causes the extraordinary discrepancies in the evidence of respectable persons in our courts of justice? Do they arise from perjury, or from this all-prevalent habit of *inattention*, which causes so many of us to see and hear things which never occurred? What is the origin of many of our lawsuits? Is it not in most instances also the *want of attention*, which causes us frequently on both sides to misunderstand the true nature of our bargains. Finally, why is it that so many of our divines fail to produce any effect by their most eloquent addresses, even upon the most pious and anxious? Is it not owing to the habit of inattention being so firmly fixed by the whole course of their education, that it is next to impossible for them to bestow a steady attention on the speaker? Can we, then, affix too great a value to a mode of teaching arithmetic, which enables us so thoroughly to understand the subject as to form our own rules, and to solve most of the questions likely to occur in practice, mentally; which teaches us to think; to perceive our mental operations, and to be able to explain them; and, finally, which fixes a habit of attention in early youth, which will exert a permanent influence on every period of life.

This noble invention is the result of the labors of one man, Warren Colburn; a name which, if utility be the standard of merit, will ever live in the grateful remembrance of mankind. The introduction of this little book into our schools will do more towards disenthraling the community from the dominion of prejudice and mental darkness than all the labors of metaphysicians for the last three thousand years, from Aristotle down to Reid, Stewart, and Brown. Everywhere its introduction into the schools has been followed by an evident increase of intelligence among the scholars, and several teachers have acknowledged, that their knowledge of the principles of arithmetic has been much extended by simply putting the questions, and hearing the replies.

There are various ways of using this book, some of them sufficiently ridiculous. The questions are intended to be solved mentally, without the aid of pen or pencil; yet many teachers set their pupils to *study* it, to work out the questions on the slate, and even in some cases to write down the

answers, and commit them to memory for recitation. The most valuable advantages of the system, particularly the cultivation of the faculty of attention, are thus lost. In my opinion, there should be but one copy in school, and its place should be the teacher's desk.

A singular blunder has been committed respecting this book in some schools, against which I should not have thought it necessary to have cautioned so respectable an assembly as this, had it not been productive of serious consequences. The mistake has arisen from considering the work as intended to *supersede* written arithmetic, instead of a mere introduction and assistant to its acquisition. How such an idea could have arisen I cannot conceive. Yet I have understood from different quarters, that young men have gone into counting-houses in Boston, supposing themselves proficient in arithmetic, whose whole knowledge of the science was derived from Colburn's work, and who probably could not add the figures in an account or ledger. The consequence, as might have been foreseen, was their immediate dismissal. What must have been the mortification of these young men, to be forced to re-enter school to learn the first single rules of written arithmetic! But how much greater ought to have been the mortification of their teacher to have been the cause of such a blunder! Colburn's valuable book has unfortunately labored under much discredit from this most singular and stupid misapprehension.

A few years ago, I had the honor, as president of our county Lyceum, of delivering an address before a convention of teachers, in which, having taken occasion to notice the advantages arising from the proper use of Colburn's work, I concluded by giving it as my opinion, that it had a tendency to produce quite a revolution in our morals, politics, and religion. A worthy minister of the gospel, who rose to address the teachers as I sat down, observed, that he fully concurred in most of my views as to the merits of Colburn's Arithmetic, but would suggest that I had gone rather too far in attributing to it a power of producing a *revolution* in morals, politics, and religion. To show, however, said he what it is capable of producing, I will state to the convention its effects in a seminary with which I have been many years connected. It is well known to all my brethren present, said he, that the chief difficulty the ministry have to encounter, is the incapacity of our hearers to give us a continued attention. The slightest



interruption, the opening or shutting of a door, the moving of a dog, the fall of a book, will divert and distract the attention of the most anxious and serious. Now, in the school I have mentioned, continued he, I could call up a class of girls, from eight to twelve years old, disciplined by Colburn's Arithmetic, and lecture to them for half an hour on any subject suited to their capacity, and, though the rest of the school should pass out and in, to and fro, the attention of the class would not be distracted for a moment, nor my subject lost sight of. Continuing to dilate on the subject, the advantages of such a discipline appeared every moment in brighter colors to the speaker, till at length he concluded with the very sentiment he had risen to controvert. "I give it," said he, "as my decided opinion, that Colburn's Arithmetic has a tendency to produce quite a revolution in our morals, politics, and religion."

Having now completed my examination of the first principles of education, allow me to revert to the question with which I began, and ask, whether it is preferable to go on as we have done, patching and extending our present system, or immediately to commence the erection of a new structure, where everything really valuable of the old may be incorporated, but into which nothing shall enter without a thorough examination into its soundness and fitness. But, should the latter be decided on, who shall be the architect? Shall this important duty be entrusted to an individual, or shall it be conferred on a committee? and if the former, shall the plan rest entirely on its own merits, or shall it be submitted to the officers of this society, or a select committee, for revision and approval? These are weighty questions, which I beg leave to submit to your serious consideration.

To such of you as are teachers of primary schools, allow me to say, that I trust you will think that I have sufficiently compared the new mode with the old to show, that the one is well calculated to teach children to *read understandingly*, and to *think*, while the other, at best, can only make them *expert puppets*. If this *has* been done to your satisfaction, if you are convinced that this new system will have a strong tendency to awaken the energies of the infant mind, will teach it not to rest contented with dogmatic assertions, whether delivered orally or through the medium of books, but to examine for itself, and demand a good reason for every thing — if you are convinced of this, I say, no entreaties of mine will



be necessary to cause you instantly to set about reform. Do not be deceived, however ; opposition, violent opposition must be looked for. Some men are not *capable* of examining the subject ; others do not like the trouble, and are rather disposed to shut their ears than to give it a fair examination : and it is not to be wondered at if men are stirred up to resistance, when those principles which have from early education struck deep into all their habits of thinking, are torn up by the very roots. But the object to be attained is so precious, that we should not allow ourselves to be deterred or frightened by opposition. This object is nothing less than to make the *whole* of the rising generation (and of course their posterity *for ever*, for education can never retrograde) a *thinking people*. By the present system we know this cannot be effected. A few superior minds to be sure, in every age, will rise, in spite of the trammels of a defective education. But the great mass of the community are led, blindly led. Surely this ought not to be, in a *country*, where the government is really, substantially in the hands of the whole people ; in a *world*, where the happiness or misery of immortal souls so much depends on their present training.

The time allotted for this address has not been sufficient to allow so complete a detail of the improved mode of teaching as I could have wished. Had I not been afraid of trespassing too much on your patience, I should have been pleased to have taken up the proper books, and given practical illustrations, and also to have pointed out the errors which experience has shown that teachers are apt to fall into in changing from the mechanical to the intellectual method of instruction. I should also have been pleased to have given examples in elucidation of the proposed mode of simplifying written arithmetic. If the hints I have thrown out, however, be thought of any value, I may, perhaps, have the privilege granted me of offering a few of those practical illustrations at one of our evening meetings.

GENTLEMEN OF THE INSTITUTE,

I thank you for the kind and patient attention with which I have been favored. I am fully conscious of the disadvantages under which a plain farmer, from a remote section of the country, must labor, in addressing a body accustomed chiefly to listen to the valuable lectures of our most learned profes-

sors, divines, and lawyers. I am also sensible, that my distance from your metropolis, whence so much light on the subject of education is constantly emanating, may have caused me to form too low an estimate of the improvements already introduced into your district schools. Still, however, I flatter myself with the hope, that your time has not been entirely misspent in listening to the results of long and anxious study, and ardent practical investigation of this important subject. If my labors shall prove the medium of introducing any, even the slightest real improvement into the system of primary education, most amply shall I consider myself rewarded,



**LECTURE X.**

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**ON**

**READING AND DECLAMATION.**

**By WILLIAM RUSSELL.**





## READING AND DECLAMATION.

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HAVING been unexpectedly called on to supply the place of the individual who was appointed to deliver the lecture assigned to this hour, I feel it due to the audience and to myself to offer a word of explanation, before entering on the subject which has been announced.\* I come, of course, unprepared for the occasion. But it has been suggested to me, that, as the Institute has hitherto expressed a desire to have the addresses on such occasions as this embody, as much as may be, the results of experience, and the practical observations arising from these, I might be permitted to offer a few remarks on a branch of education which practice has made familiar to me.

It is necessary, however, that, in taking up the subjects of reading and declamation, I should advert, for a moment, to the eloquent and interesting lecture to which we have already list-

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\* The writer of this lecture was, during the session of the Institute, requested to occupy the hour assigned to one of the gentlemen regularly appointed, whom unforeseen business had detained from the annual meeting. Want of time for preparation placed the lecturer under the necessity of offering, instead of a methodical composition, a few extemporaneous statements on the branch of instruction in which he is principally occupied. This explanation will, it is hoped, account for omissions of memory, or other variations from the lecture as orally delivered, as well as for the want of systematic connexion in its topics, and for the controversial aspect of some parts of it, in which views are maintained at variance with those advanced in the lecture on Elocution. The theory of instruction adopted by the author of the lecture now offered, having been assailed by the lecturer on Elocution, it became necessary to assert and maintain its accuracy, before entering on practical details.

ened on the same or similar topics. I do this with the greater pleasure, from my respect and esteem for the author of that lecture, my high opinion of his attainments, my entire sympathy with the spirit and tenor of his observations, and my acquiescence in the justness of many of his practical directions.

But as the theory of the subjects of reading and declamation, on which my own ideas are founded, and by which my suggestions for practice are regulated, is drawn principally from the two eminent writers whose authority my predecessor has attempted to set aside, it seems necessary to offer a word in support of their respective systems.

First, with regard to the justly celebrated work of Dr. Rush, entitled the *Philosophy of the Human Voice*,—a work truly called the philosophy of the voice, if the most masterly specimen of analysis that modern times have furnished in any department of science, is entitled to such a name. The treatise of Dr. Rush, is the only one in which the modifications of the voice in speech have been analysed and defined,—the only one which has offered to instructors the benefit of an exact and intelligible designation of the vocal sounds uttered in reading and in speaking. Here, and here only, we find the actual phenomena of voice furnished with an appropriate nomenclature, by which they can be made audible realities,—things to which we may precisely and satisfactorily refer. The vocal modifications which constitute speech having been thus individually detected and denominated, to reduce them to a system of “artificial music,” became a matter of no great difficulty. The practicability of the thing had been already demonstrated, in the use of the appropriate terms and characters of the sister art of music.

That Dr. Rush has successfully accomplished the analysis and the designation of the intonations of speech, has never been seriously questioned, till in the present instance. Some superficial critics, familiar neither with the functions nor the modulations of the voice, and wholly unread in the science of music, have attempted to turn the theory of Dr. Rush into a matter of ridicule. The discoveries made in the exploration of a new branch of human knowledge, have always afforded amusement, for a while, to the unreflecting. To doubt, to cavil, or to sneer, is, unfortunately, too easy a process. But the advancement of general knowledge, with sure, though slow step, comes up at length to the attainments of the individual

whose zeal and whose research were at one time deemed fit topics for burlesque.

So it has been in the case before us. The theory of Dr. Rush is adopted by nearly all intelligent instructors in the department of elocution ; and the gentleman who disparaged his treatise, would at once himself acknowledge its truth, could he be placed, as he might be, by the side of that genuine pupil of the inductive philosophy, and hear him, with his unrivalled facility and skill, detect and define every modification of the gentleman's own voice. My friend, who addressed us, has not, I fear, done the justice of investigation to this subject, as he has so fully to others, but has been influenced by preconceived opinion, or deterred by the apparent difficulty of mastering the system, or hindered by the impediments arising from a want of an adequate knowledge of music. No intelligent pupil of the science last named can, on candid examination, reject the theory of Dr. Rush. A man, it is true, may read and speak well without a systematic knowledge of the voice ; as many write well without a systematic knowledge of composition, or even of grammar. But who would deny the utility of the study of these branches, or the correctness of the rules and principles laid down in the manuals on these subjects ?

The objections of the lecturer on elocution, to the system of the voice laid down by Dr. Rush, are founded on an entire mistake relating to the plan and design of that author's work. The *Philosophy of the Voice* was not intended as a practical manual on the subject. It was not meant to impart directions, or to trace applications in detail, but to point out the actual phenomena of the human voice, as presented in the function of speech. The author's task was to analyse and to designate, to trace and to state the facts, to arrange and classify these, — to do, in short, what the title of his treatise implies, to give a philosophic exposition — that is to say, a strictly analytical one — of the audible part of expression. The rules and directions for *using* the voice, belong to the practical business of oral instruction. With these Dr. Rush had nothing to do but incidentally, for a casual purpose of illustration or remark. He left, therefore, the practical exposition of his system to be done by teachers themselves ; and, accordingly, we have a suitable manual on his method, prepared by Dr. Barber, — a volume, of which Dr. Rush has expressed a favorable opinion, as a useful compend of his own treatise.



But it is necessary to follow the lecturer in detail, and here, the first objection to Dr. Rush's system we find to be, that "the rise and fall of the voice\* in speaking are designated by fixed intervals." To any person accustomed to appreciate musical intervals, nothing can be more easily ascertained than the correctness of Dr. Rush's statements under this head. To demonstrate the thing, it is only necessary that a passage adapted to recitation or to declamation be selected, and that the individual who wishes to make the experiment, pronounce the words very slowly, and with a full prolongation of every sound, particularly the words most conspicuously marked by rising and falling slides. Let an accompaniment, in strict unison with the voice, be performed, meanwhile, on a piano or a violin, and the notes of the instrument will prove the exact intervals of all the slides or waves executed by the voice. No person who has not resorted to this test, is at liberty to condemn the theory presented in the *Philosophy of the Voice*; and no one who has made the experiment can question the accuracy of the author's views. It will be found, invariably, on such a trial as has been suggested, that the rise and fall of the voice are through exact and measured intervals, which were only for the moment concealed from the ear, by the comparative rapidity of speech, but which, nevertheless do exist; as is at once evinced by substituting one interval for another, and thereby producing an unmeaning or an unnatural tone.

If the question then be put, "What good is to be attained by knowing the precise intervals in such cases?" — we answer at once, all the good that ever comes from knowledge in place of ignorance. The teacher of elocution has it in his power, by means of Dr. Rush's analysis, not only to detect a fault of utterance, but to show precisely what the fault is, and to exhibit clearly, in illustration, the true tone which he wishes his pupil to acquire. The *Philosophy of the Voice* furnishes him with the definite name of the modification of voice to which he refers. He no longer "fights as one that beats the air," but has a specific aim, — a tangible object, as it were, and a straight course to reach it. What a contrast to the time-worn expedient of "Read as I read" — tried and tried again — for the twentieth time, perhaps — but without success; because neither the teacher nor the pupil had a perfectly clear idea of

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\* Technically denominated *inflections, slides, or waves.*

what the ear seemed to demand, nor a name to call it by. Surely if any thing can be ranked among the unquestionable facilities of improved education, it is the aid arising from the analysis and the nomenclature furnished by Dr. Rush, in this hitherto intricate branch of elocution.

I may be permitted, I think, to enter here still farther into detail; as this is a point involving the business of actual tuition. — A “school” tone, as it is called, — in other words, a mechanical and unmeaning tone, — in reading, arises commonly from using, too uniformly, the rising wave through the intervals of the third and the fifth, and consequently the downward wave in proportion, — as the ear, even when not what is called “musical,” is, in all cases, so attuned as inevitably to produce this correspondence. A false and unmeaning echoing of its own notes is thus entailed on the voice, causing it to move through a whole passage or piece with a regular march of alternate climbing and descending; as if the utterance of sentiment were a thing altogether inferior to a uniform rising, culminating, and sinking of tone. To correct this faulty habit, the teacher must have it in his power to designate the false intervals which it forms, and to contrast them with those of the *tone* and “*ditone*” which are to be interspersed with them, or occasionally substituted for them; and the student must be practised on these definite intervals, till he can command them at pleasure. — Something, it is true, may be done on the old plan of guess work and imitation. But how imperfectly in comparison!

Every intelligent teacher of elocution must feel that he is under a strong personal obligation to the individual whose philosophic spirit of investigation has shed a clear light on his path, where formerly he grasped in obscurity, or ventured at random. I feel assured that my friend who preceded me in lecturing on our present subject, could never have questioned either the accuracy or the utility of Dr. Rush’s analysis, had he fully investigated its merits; but that, on the contrary, where he has now bestowed most censure, he would have found reason for the warmest commendation.

I will not dwell on the very strong terms in which the author of the lecture on elocution has indulged, in speaking on the point under discussion; although I cannot but regret that one of the original achievements of American intellect, in the department of scientific investigation, should be scouted by an American student; and that a theory grounded on profound

and extensive research, not only in the science in question, but in its kindred sciences and arts, — a theory built up with all the rigor and circumspection of genuine philosophy, should be assailed by one whose attention to the subject has been so slight.

The author of the lecture proceeds to say, on the topic now before us, "Geometrical measurement by lines and angles is really as applicable to a smile or a frown, as a plan of musical notes to the voice of one speaking in earnest." Here is evidently a mistake in regard to the design of the *Philosophy of the Voice*. That work was not meant as a manual of instruction by which the teacher or the student was to regulate the voice. The author of that treatise demonstrates that many of the varying tones of the human voice, in speech, admit of a musical notation, and that such notation may be useful for the purposes of instruction, or as a means of referring to the tones of successful speakers. And it is for the very reason that "the expression of the voice is often as delicate and evanescent as that of the countenance," that the apparatus furnished by Dr. Rush, for seizing and embodying such fugitive phenomena, is invaluable to the instructor, to the student, to the curious inquirer, or to the lover of the art of elocution.

So far as it is in my own power to speak, from long critical observation, and many years' practice in instruction, I can freely declare, that there is no quality of voice, used in the most poetic passages of recitation, and in the most delicate and ethereal utterance ever occurring, even in these, that may not be distinctly and exactly presented to the eye, or to the mind, by means of the characters and the nomenclature exhibited in the *Philosophy of the Voice*. But to attempt the demonstration of such points, at present, would lead far beyond the limits of a lecture.

The lecturer on Elocution must have quite misapprehended the author of the *Philosophy of the Voice*, if he supposes that Dr. Rush would *not* have the voice "often rise and fall in correspondence with the equable increase or diminution of feeling." The value of the system adopted by Dr. Rush, is, that it enables us distinctly to ascertain the phenomena of the voice as they shift and vary in successive utterance, that it traces even the finest and most delicate, and designates these as distinctly as the musician does the most subtle and evanescent modulations in singing.



The language of the lecturer is plausible but altogether vague, when he says, "The impossibility of fixing the degree of emotion by any artificial rules, involves the impossibility of fixing its expression." It is not so much the *degree*, generally speaking, as the *quality* of emotion that determines tone. But even the *degree* of emotion, is, in some instances, the very measure of intonation; as is evident in the use of the "wave" in surprise, which is expressed by a transit through the interval of a third, a fifth or an octave, according to the degree of feeling. The context of a given passage always indicates, with sufficient clearness, the extent of emotion implied; and, in such a case as that just mentioned, would perhaps forbid the octave as a caricature, or the third as an inadequate expression; or, again, might demand the octave, as the only effective one, or the third as the chaste and appropriate utterance, in a particular passage, according to the character of the emotion which it embodied.

"Real emotion," says the lecturer on Elocution, "always suffices of itself to regulate its expression by proper tones; and it only can regulate them with perfect precision. To admit the interference of art in the matter must be worse than useless." Farewell, then, to all instruction in elocution! For elocution is art; and it is in the expression of emotion that cultivated taste and feeling are most effective. The ancient orators surely "disquieted themselves in vain," in their arduous endeavors to attain perfection in the utterance of emotion. There must evidently be a radical error, here, in the views of the lecturer. Were we all educated from infancy on perfect models of example, we should fulfil the condition which he demands. But till then, ninety-nine in the hundred will, by the period of adolescence, have contracted false or defective tones, even in the utterance of sincere and intense feeling. Witness the irresistibly ludicrous tones which mingle with the expression of ordinary emotions, in the colloquial inflections of local dialect in Switzerland, in Scotland, and in New England. Without that cultivation which genuine art prescribes, an individual of the highest order of endowment and of acquisition, may have his whole delivery disfigured by such faults.

But in this, as in several other instances, the design of Dr. Rush's system has been misunderstood. It was not intended to prompt, or to measure, or to interfere with emotion, but to furnish an exact exposition of its phenomena, and an appropriate designation of them. The teacher and the student



must settle the question of application between themselves, according to the meaning of given passages, and the constitution and habits of the individual who practises. To enable them to do this effectually, the author of the *Philosophy of the Voice* offers them a classification of tones, and an intelligible designation of them.

I need not dwell longer on positions which are evidently assumed through misapprehension on the part of the gentleman whose lecture was, in general, characterized by judicious observation and discriminating taste. I entertain no doubt that a few days' study and practical application of the principles of the work which he condemned, would remove every objection which he has advanced to its authority, and prove, to his full conviction, the value of that volume, as the only true fountain of instruction on the art of elocution. Were that book appreciated according to its merits, as a profound and original work on the theory of one of the noblest arts, it would be used as the text book in all our high places of instruction; teachers would make it their great study; it would be claimed as a national production, reflecting honor on the community in which it originated. Had its author lived in those times when eloquence was cherished as an attainment almost divine, and they who contributed to facilitate its acquisition were rewarded as distinguished benefactors of mankind, neither statue nor votive wreath would have been wanting to his honor.

Regarding the theory of Gesture as properly coming within the range of a lecture on elocution, the gentleman who preceded me on our subject, advanced objections to the great standard work on gesture, Austin's *Chironomia*. To these I wish to offer a brief reply, before entering on the general topics embraced in my subsequent remarks.

Justice to the work of Mr. Austin requires, although my friend who lectured on the subject of elocution disposed of it so summarily, that we should advert to the facts of the case as to its acknowledged authority. The *Chironomia* is used as a book of reference, by many of the most eminent public speakers of Great Britain. It is universally regarded as a competent treatise on its subject, as a production embodying the most valuable results of extensive learning and of cultivated taste, and as a rich contribution to the treasury of the fine arts. But in the case of this work, — as in that of Dr. Rush — the lecturer has formed an erroneous idea of the design of its author. The *Chironomia*, like the *Philosophy of the*

Voice, is an analysis of the subject of which it treats. It classifies and designates gesture, on a plan equally ingenious and clear. It contains with a single exception, no recipe for the acquisition of gesture in given passages. It shows us merely what the corporal frame does in the act of expression, so far as relates to that part of oratory, which is addressed to the eye. Like the work of Dr. Rush on the voice, it offers the invaluable aid of classification and nomenclature. But it never was intended as a manual of directions. It enables the teacher to detect faults in gesture and position, and to point them out to the student, by specific and intelligible illustration or direction, as a particular instance may require. It arranges gesture most skilfully, according to its character and import, but prescribes nothing. The author takes care, on the contrary, to remind the student, even in the passage in which he gives an example of the application of his method, that the proper delivery of the piece which he has selected, is by no means limited to the attitudes and action which he has indicated. His purpose was not to substitute rules of art for the promptings of nature, but to observe and teach what action is — leaving the student to judge, to select, and to apply, for himself.

The lecturer is in error when he says that, in the *Chironomia*, “gesture is *taught* by diagrams.” *Designated*, not “*taught*,” should have been the word. The diagrams in that work serve the same purpose that diagrams do in any other; they render ideas definite and tangible, clear and intelligible. The instructor and the student are to decide, in any instance, what gestures are appropriate, what to select or to apply; and, for this purpose, nomenclature and diagrams are an invaluable aid, as giving clearness and precision to the details of instruction and practice.

When the author of the *Chironomia* says, in the instance already referred to, “The manner of delivery is such as occurred, and might have been varied in a thousand ways,” he only shows us the more conclusively how far his intention was from prescribing any series of gesture in the delivery of a particular piece. The natural hyperbole in his expression regarding the allowable variety of action in a single passage, will hardly mislead an attentive and reflecting reader.

The lecturer proceeds to say, “In another part of his book, having treated of certain gestures which he terms non-significant, he says: “These may be used in any part of an ora-

tion, and belong to every character and style of speaking." By this quotation we are left to infer that there is no such thing as distinction or classification in gesture, or that the author is at fault in regard to the whole class of gestures denominated "non-significant." Candor here compels me to say, that the manner in which this quotation is introduced, proves either that the lecturer has not attentively perused the part of the book which he condemns, or that he has utterly misunderstood the author's meaning.

Mr. Austin, in his ingenious classification of gesture, very justly discriminates between those which, (as for instance, the clenching and shaking of the fist in threatening,) have a natural *significance*, universally recognised by mankind, and those which, like the simple rising and falling of the hand in the didactic and unimpassioned parts of a discourse, have *no direct significance*, but serve rather to give vent to the animation and earnestness of the speaker, or to aid the general force of delivery. To gestures of this description the author of the *Chironomia* has applied, for a temporary purpose of distinction, the designation of non-significant. The vocabulary of the art of delivery, did not furnish him with an appropriate term; and he therefore introduced one which, although it might startle a hasty reader, in the act of turning over the leaves of the book, could not mislead one who carefully perused and studied it.

I regret that my friend should have committed himself by groundless strictures on a received text-book; and that, in this instance, he should have deviated so far from his habits as a scholar, as to condemn a theory, without careful investigation. I feel assured, however, that, when leisure shall have permitted him to review the subject which we are discussing, and to re-peruse the work on which he has commented, he will be fully convinced that intelligible and efficacious instruction in rhetorical action, must be founded on close analysis and definite references, aided by a precise nomenclature. In other words, that the teacher needs the assistance of exactly such a work as Austin's *Chironomia*.

One word on the subject so often introduced in the lecture on elocution, — the inefficacy or the "interference" of art in this branch of education. Every mind imbued with the pure love of nature, and with manly simplicity of taste, must revolt at whatever is artificial in the effect of delivery. But is there therefore no art of delivery? — are there no methods, no



rules, for acquiring a just delivery? The proper question is, What is true art? For true art is nature consummated in life and action. True art is the product of genuine taste; and genuine taste is elicited and cherished by the observation of correct models, and disciplined by reflection on these. Hence spring the principles that are to be embodied in rules and practice.

Culture and art, then, are immense advantages, if coincident with nature; and it is such art, and such culture only, that are desired in education.. But to a complete education their aid is indispensable. It is too common in our day to neglect important parts of mental cultivation, and then to disparage them as artificial. Let art be unsparingly condemned where it leads to artifice and trick. But let it have due scope where its character is genuine, and its effects conducive to all the best ends of human culture.\*

Never was a greater mistake uttered than in the lecturer's assertion, "Emotion and art cannot coalesce in the soul." Did Michael Angelo, then, execute his "Last Judgment," with a cold mechanical dexterity merely? Who can look at those tremendous displays of human power, exhibited in the various groups and figures of that wonderful series of representations, and doubt that the soul of the artist was impelled and exalted by the most vehement emotion, in the act of executing them? What was the power of Demosthenes, but an unparalleled "coalescing of emotion and art" in delivery? True art does not impair, but deepens, concentrates, and excites genuine emotion.

Whatever the lecturer has urged against "hypocrisy" and "mimicry" can only apply to the delivery of actors of the lowest class, who follow their profession mechanically, and try to do artificially what good actors do from sympathy with the author whose words they recite. It is the testimony of all good performers, even in this most mimetic of the arts, that,

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\* The tendency to disparage acquirement inevitably descends from teachers to the young, and predisposes them to indolence and inapplication. The friends of a young man destined to professional life, as a public speaker, were solicitous about his success in speaking, and suggested the importance of his devoting himself to the study and practice of elocution. "I want no artificial training," was his prompt reply: "find me the thing to say, and I'll find the manner of saying it." This young man must have consciously possessed, by special endowment, all that it cost Demosthenes so many laborious years to master.



when they acquit themselves well, it is when they feel most in the *spirit* of the character which they represent.

When "the author of the *Philosophy of the Voice* asserts that the pleasure imparted by sculpture and painting comes from a disciplined reflection on those principles of taste that directed their production," he speaks, evidently of the pleasure experienced by the connoisseur; and when the lecturer asserts that "he merits pity, who is susceptible of no pleasure at the sight of a picture or a statue, but what results from disciplined reflection on principles," he refers to the pleasure felt by the amateur. But this pleasure is not less vivid in the feelings of the connoisseur; and to this he adds the reflective pleasure of judgment and taste. Why not enjoy both? The same thing is true of the effects of oratory, which although "it does not derive its origin from taste," *does* "appeal to taste," though incidentally, and has ever been, and must be, a subject for the exercise of taste. True, "it gushes from other, deeper fountains." But why may it not flow gracefully where it may, as well as forcibly where it must? Is it not, indeed, the very dictate of genuine taste to neglect grace, when force is to sweep all before it; or, rather, is not that force itself a higher beauty, which true taste recognises and delights in?

Thus far I have felt bound to follow the lecturer who preceded me on our present subject, and to enter a protest against his views. In what he has so well expressed on the subjects of culture and habit, and on many other practical points, I need not say that I entirely acquiesce. I have objected only to those statements which seemed at variance with the true grounds of instruction in this branch, and with the established authorities in its principal departments. I will now proceed, as briefly as possible, to mention what appear to be the chief topics of practical instruction in reading and declamation.

The first point to which early cultivation should be directed, is the *personal tone*, or pervading quality, of the pupil's voice. I refer here to that peculiarity of utterance which renders one individual's voice grave and hollow, another's high and sharp; that of a third, guttural and compressed; that of a fourth, nasal; that of a fifth, stifled in the head.

The pliant organs of childhood afford the teacher opportunity, in most instances, of moulding and determining the character of the voice, at will; so as to keep it from habitual faults, and ensure it its utmost excellence. It is to the very

common neglect of early discipline that we are to attribute the prevalence of guttural and nasal tones, and other vocal defects, by which public speaking is so often marred in subsequent life. Time will not permit me to enter on the details of exercise appropriate for this purpose. These have been presented in the appendix to a manual prepared with reference to practical instruction in this branch of elocution.\* Specific directions for cultivating the mode of utterance appropriate for public speaking, occur also in that part of Dr. Rush's work, which treats of what he has denominated the *orotund* voice. For the present, it must suffice to say, that the voice of every human being is so constituted as, if trained in the proper manner, to become not only a clear and pliant but an agreeable instrument of sound. The species of vocal exercise referred to above, is of the greatest assistance in relieving the public speaker of fatigue, or saving him from exhaustion; and it is not less important to a distinct and well sustained articulation, as the means of giving body and clearness to every sound of the voice.

*Force*, as an important modification of voice, whether we regard the demands of audible utterance, or those of the various emotions of the speaker, requires extensive and varied practice. This is a point on which juvenile speakers are, in general, extremely deficient. Their inadequate conceptions of due force, and, sometimes, their personal embarrassment of feeling, hinder the easy attainment of adequate utterance; while in some instances, an indefinite pervading excitement of manner, is apt to efface those delicate but significant modifications of force, which give finish and power to expression. The command of every degree of force, from whispering to shouting, ought to be a diligent study.

The true *pitch* of the voice with reference to the natural habits of the speaker, and the appropriate keys of different emotions, is another indispensable requisite to appropriate utterance. The teacher has sometimes to aid the student in avoiding a grave, hollow, unnatural pitch; sometimes to guard him against a shrill and disagreeable one; and, at all times, to watch closely the appropriate shifting of note, according to the changes of feeling in the strain of the sentiments which are uttered.

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\* Lessons in Enunciation; comprising a Course of Elementary Exercises, and a statement of common Errors in Articulation, with the Rules of correct usage in Pronouncing. By William Russell. Boston: C. J. Hendee.

*Time*, or the rate of speech, is the next important object of attention, in practical instruction. Under this head are embraced the deliberate utterance requisite to intelligible expression, the rate prescribed by different classes of emotions, and the proportion of pauses required for distinctness and impressive effect. On every modification of time the learner should be thoroughly practised, till each is perfectly at command. Exercises adapted to this and the two preceding subjects, occur in the manual mentioned before.

The point next in order, in practical tuition, is the formation of a perfectly *distinct enunciation*. It is unnecessary to advert to the prevalence of faulty habits in this particular, or to the benefit arising from clear articulation, as an aid to delivery, saving the speaker the fatigue of loud utterance, and facilitating to his audience the correct apprehension of his meaning. Dr. Rush's analysis of the vocal elements of our language, enables teachers to prescribe to their pupils a thorough course of practice in articulation, which cannot fail of imparting precision and accuracy to the functions of the organs of speech. The common errors of local usage, in this department of elocution, will be found, in detail, in the manual to which reference has been made.

Correct *pronunciation* is closely allied to distinct articulation, as a matter of usage. Utility and taste alike demand a careful attention to this branch of elocution. Local errors of habit are everywhere prevalent; and instructors themselves are apt to yield to custom around them, and to pass over inaccuracies, arising from this source, in their pupils. A literal adherence to Walker's notation of ortheopy, is, in the case of some instructors, the cause not only of inaccurate usage, but of incorrect inculcation. But it is unnecessary to enlarge on this subject here; as it is fully discussed in the Lessons on Enunciation.\*

On the subject of the *inflections* or *waves* of the voice, the aid arising from Dr. Rush's analysis, is an invaluable facility, in the practical part of instruction. This branch of elocution should be carefully studied and fully mastered, with reference to a perfect appreciation and command of exact intervals. In New England, especially, the habits arising from local custom

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\* A reference to the above work, will, it is hoped, render it unnecessary to repeat, in writing, some of the oral statements introduced in the delivery of the lecture.



are extremely faulty in this particular, producing an odd and half ludicrous peculiarity of inflection, particularly when combined with emphasis. This objectionable turn of voice exists in no other part of this country, or of any other in which the English language is spoken. The fault, (technically described,) is that of substituting the circumflex, or double wave of voice, for the simple inflection or single wave. The effect of this fault, on ears not habituated to the local error, is either that of a sinister or punning accent, or that of an over anxiety about the hearer apprehending the speaker's meaning, as in the tone of a teacher explaining something abstruse to a class of very young pupils. Connected with this association, it gives to New England intonation that over precise and studied character which is peculiar to it, as contrasted with local accent elsewhere, or with the requisitions of good taste in expression.

The extent to which this unfortunate trait of habit prevails in all classes of society, the educated scarcely less than the uneducated, is such as to require the utmost vigilance of teachers. Here, again, the attentive instructor will perceive the extent of his obligations to Dr. Rush, whose rigorous analysis of this part of elocution, — had his work offered nothing else, — would have been an invaluable contribution to the resources of improved instruction. The Philosophy of the Voice defines and designates every form of the wave, single and double, and classes these so distinctly, that the teacher is left without excuse, if he does not eradicate from his own utterance and that of his pupil, every trace of local error in this particular.

The order of tuition leads us next to a highly important branch of the subject, and another on which the author of the Philosophy of the Voice lays claim to the grateful acknowledgments of teachers. I refer to *emphasis*, a modification of the voice which never had been submitted to analytical investigation, till discussed by Dr. Rush. The value of his labors here may be briefly indicated by referring to the fact, that his analysis enables the teacher to detect and designate whatever personal fault happens to characterise the emphasis used by a pupil in any instance. Vocal phenomena are so subtle and fugitive, especially in this department, that, without such aid, instruction was imperfect and inefficacious where it now



attains to the utmost clearness of definition and certainty of effect.

Appropriate *pausing*, as the consequence or the precursor of emphasis, next requires attentive training; since the rapid succession of thought and feeling in the juvenile mind inclines the manner of youthful readers and speakers to a hurried and superficial utterance, and to the consequent omission of those cessations of voice which group or detach words and phrases, according to their connexion in sense.

The appropriate *intonation of feeling*, is, so far as concerns all those effects of eloquence which appeal to sympathy, the most important part of elocution. It is this which gives life and power to sentiment, and raises utterance from the level of mechanical sound to the dignity of the noblest of human functions. Speech, destitute of the genuine tones of emotion, becomes an unmeaning and vapid succession of noises, which fall dead upon the listless ear, and fail even to arouse the attention and the understanding. Yet how generally is public reading conducted in this manner! Witness sleeping congregations, and yawning classes!

The prevalence of inexpressive tones is owing, principally, to the unfortunate practice, at school, of reading pieces unintelligible or uninteresting to the young mind, — in part, to the ennui of school exercise, and to the too general want of interest in this branch of instruction, on the part of teachers. The fault, with adults, is sometimes owing to false reserve of habit, arising, perhaps, from an inactive and too secluded life, — perhaps from an impression that the chief end of public communication is to convey facts to the understanding, or principles to the reason; while the power of feeling and imagination to embody and impress these very facts and principles, is overlooked.

Our early culture and training are extremely deficient, as regards the effects of expression. No adequate provision is made for the nurture or direction of the affections, — none for the moulding of imagination. Enough and more than enough of drilling and repetition, is done for the intellect, but comparatively nothing for those powers which give form and character to language. A proper discipline of the young mind, with reference to expression, would embrace all the vivifying and inspiring influences of nature and of art. An eloquent and impressive manner must ever spring from depth and fulness of feeling, embodied by a creative imagination. The action

of the whole soul is implied in all genuine eloquence ; and culture, directed to this end, must embrace the adequate exercise of all those faculties which are modified by taste, and consequently the contemplation, and study, and imitation of all objects which exert an influence on taste. The well-springs of the soul, in nature, and the copious fountains of art, must all be put in requisition, to irrigate and freshen and vivify the whole man, and cherish within him the growth of taste, the sense of beauty and the feeling of power.

But my limits forbid the discussion of this topic. It must suffice, for the moment, to say, that the attentive teacher will lose no opportunity of accustoming the ear of his pupil to those delicate perceptions and nice discriminations of tone, which prompt the utterance of strains true to nature and to genuine art, — tones to which the human sympathies at once respond in the thrill of heartfelt emotion. It is the neglect of seasonable cultivation only that causes us to fall in this respect, from the vantage ground of childhood, — the period in which all tones are true, and full, and vivid. Nothing shows more clearly the disproportion, in general culture, between the head and the heart, than the degree to which the adult is inferior to the child, so far as regards the intonation of the voice. A generous nurture of all the faculties, would impart to the adult an augmented power of utterance, with the increase of years and the advance of the mind.

In this, as in the other departments of elocution, the teacher derives an inexpressible benefit from the assistance furnished by the work of Dr. Rush, in which tones are rigorously analysed, and reduced to their component elements. The discriminating and classifying of tones, is thus rendered easy to the student ; and their acquisition becomes a matter of exactness and certainty.

My remarks on our present subject have already extended so far, that I have hardly space left, in which to say a single word on the question as to the propriety of introducing *declamation*, as an exercise in schools. Too much cannot be said against the introduction of such declamation as is of a character barely political, or that which is conversant only, with abstract ideas. Exercises of this nature are either not sufficiently intelligible or not sufficiently interesting to youth. But many of the most interesting addresses ever spoken, are perfectly adapted to the apprehension and the sympathies of the young mind. To the use of such pieces there can be no

well grounded objection. They serve, on the contrary, to enkindle the spirit of genuine eloquence in the juvenile speaker, and favor the best ends of early culture in general, by quickening the emotions and inspiring the imagination. They summon forth the activity of all the powers, in the unity of a noble impersonation.

The sweeping objections of Archbishop Whately, to the practice of declamation at school, require qualification. Their spirit is excellent; but the extent to which they are carried, is a matter of question. Literally understood, they go to abolish all training, — a result which, if brought about in all other departments of human culture, leads us infallibly backward to the 'bliss' of unpractised 'ignorance.' This state of things might gratify the wishes of the opponents of education, but surely can never commend itself to the judgment of those whose office it is to instruct and to inform.

The importance of early practice in speaking, is evinced by every consideration which is advanced in favor of early training in reading. It is urged irresistibly on all who are preparing for professions involving public duties. But it should always be regarded in its connexion with a liberal discipline of the human faculties, for whatever sphere of action individuals may be destined. Speech gives expression and effect to the silent images of thought. It inspires and enlarges the whole mind, and invigorates all its active powers. It constitutes man the benefactor of his fellow-man. The cultivation of speech is the cultivation of the soul. A generous plan of education would impart the essential benefits of this department to all men. Culture in this branch should commence in childhood. It is then that the whole nature is plastic and expansive; and it is only then that habit can be seasonably directed.

In no respect is this fact more important than in regard to the visible part of address, — attitude and action. The ungainly and ignoble mien which is so often exhibited by public speakers, the embarrassed and frigid air with which even a glowing composition is delivered, are wholly owing to the niggard character of early discipline. We endow colleges and assign laborious years for acquirement; but we do nothing for the living man. He issues from our halls of learning, a caricature, not a representative of humanity, so far as regards practice in speech. But I must not, at present, enlarge on defects.



I hasten to submit a few suggestions on this branch of education, leaving its details to be traced more at length in a work designed to discuss the elements of the subject. The manual to which I refer, comprises the substance of Austin's *Chironomia*, with the addition of such practical rules and directions as experience seemed to require.\*

One important reason for early cultivation in declamation, recitation, and the other forms of speaking, exists in the fact, that, in New England still more than in old England, a false reserve of manner is so current, particularly in persons of sedentary habit. It may be true that the natives of France and of Italy are characterised by a redundancy of gesture. But it is no less certain that New England frigidity is just as far removed from truth and nature. If we look at man, everywhere, while yet the stamp of his divine origin is freshest upon him, we find him abounding in action. Man is not an automaton, gifted with only a movable tongue. The unity of his nature, if not infracted, prompts him to throw the expression of his whole being, — soul and body alike, — into whatever moves and excites him. There is no provision in his constitution for his thinking without feeling, or feeling without expression. Speech is most emphatically a moral process. It is the function of the whole living man. The office of the teacher in elocution is to reinstate his pupils in the privileges of their birthright, to restore to them the power of living communication.

The teacher, therefore, will find much of his duty to lie in efforts to re-awaken dormant feeling and diffuse its expression throughout the frame of the young speaker. He will bring his pupil in contact with all the sources of inspiration in nature and in art. He will cultivate in him an imaginative and expressive tendency of soul. He will refer him to sculpture as a school for the discipline of taste and habit; and, especially, he will lead him to the effusions of poetry, as the great source of inspiration in the ideal. He will resort occasionally to the powerful aid of impersonation as the means of imparting life and freedom to speech, and preserving the pliancy and elasticity of imagination. Eloquence is rare, not because it is not natural, on adequate occasions, to all men; but because little or no provision is made for the acquisition of it as a habit. The recipient and passive powers of the intellect we cultivate

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\* *Rudiments of Gesture.* By William Russell. Boston, C. J. Hendee.



to a morbid excess ; but the active and moral powers we leave in a not less morbid dormancy and inertness.

One of the first objects of attention in instruction in speaking, must be the pupil's habits in relation to *attitude* and *action*. The teacher's duty is to free these from awkwardness and constraint, or from artificial precision and a fanciful, affected style. Manly freedom, chasteness, and propriety are the main points of study. Genuine propriety always implies grace. But I find it impossible to enter on even one of these points, in detail, without trespassing on the usual limits of a lecture. I must, for the present, conclude by again referring to the manual of which I have spoken, as comprehending the requisite details in this branch of the subject.



